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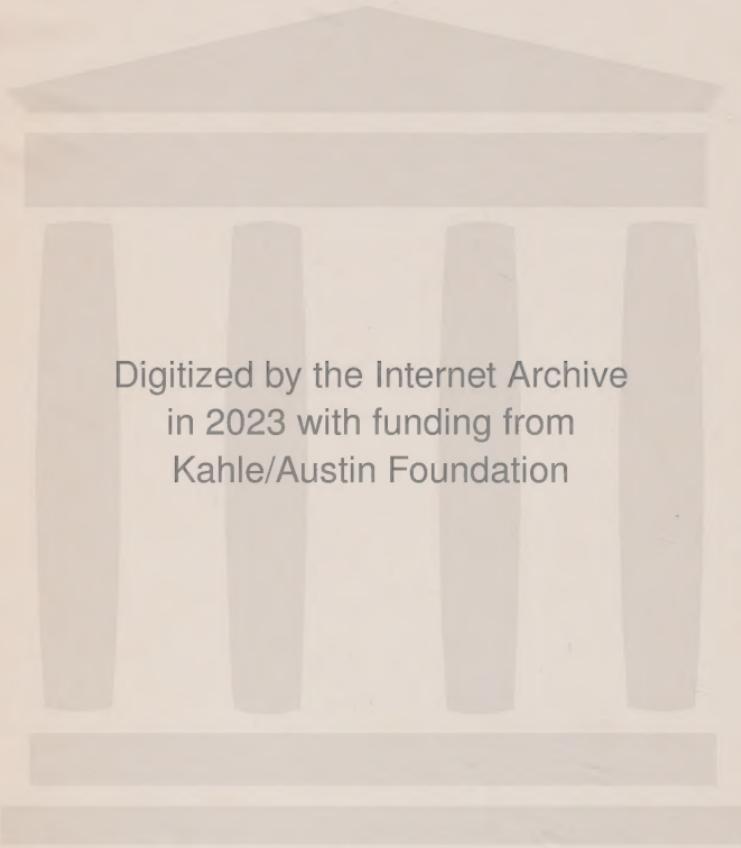
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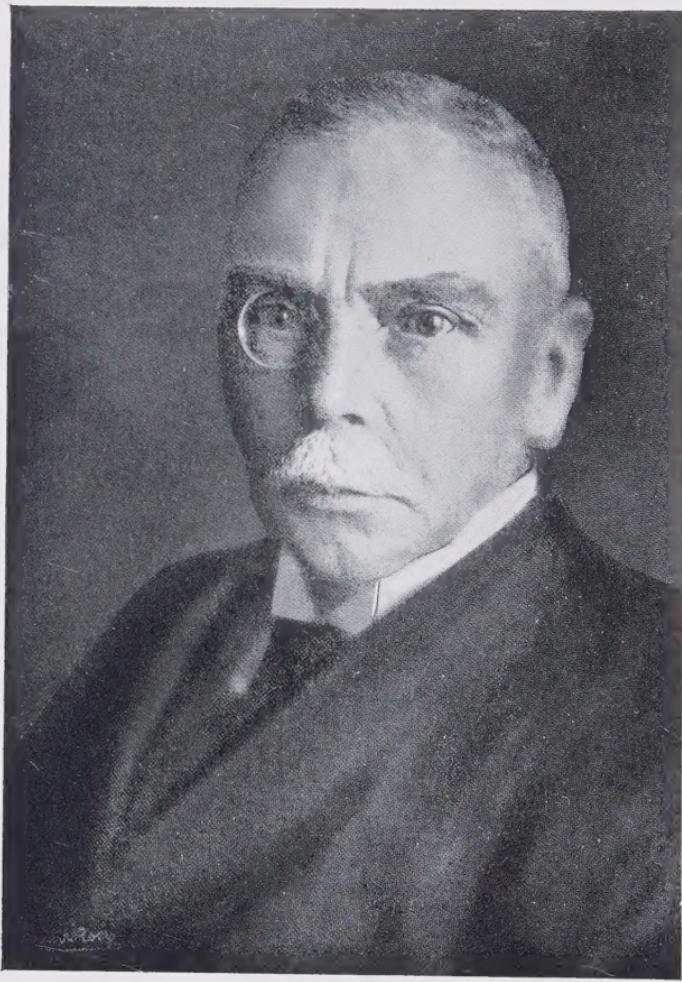
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THOUGHTS OF A SOLDIER



GENERAL VON SEECKT

GENERAL VON SEECKT
THOUGHTS OF A SOLDIER

Translated by
GILBERT WATERHOUSE

With an Introduction by
GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON

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FOREWORD

GENERAL VON SEECKT was born at Schleswig on April 22nd, 1866, and comes of a noble Pomeranian family which has supplied the Prussian state with a long succession of officers and civil servants. His father, who likewise attained general's rank and commanded an army corps, was a Knight of the highest Prussian order, the Black Eagle.

At the age of nineteen, on the completion of his studies, Von Seeckt joined his father's old regiment, the first (Emperor Alexander's) Grenadier Guards in Berlin, of which the Russian Emperors had been Honorary Colonels for a hundred years. When his period of service with the colours as Lieutenant was over, he was attached to the War Academy and the General Staff, being finally transferred to the latter in 1899. He was employed on the most varied staff duties and also commanded a company for a few years and subsequently a battalion. He devoted his periods of leave to foreign travel, visiting France, Italy, England, Spain, Africa, and especially India.

The outbreak of the Great War found him Chief of the General Staff of the Third (Brandenburg) Army Corps, which formed part of Von Kluck's First Army. In this capacity Von Seeckt took part in the fighting in Belgium and Northern France, including the

battle of Mons and the desperate encounter at Villers Cotterets, being opposed chiefly to the British troops. The German advance ended with the battle of the Ourcq, before the very gates of Paris, and the Third Corps then took up a position on the Aisne.

In February, 1915, Von Seeckt was recalled from France and appointed C.G.S. to the newly-formed Eleventh Army under General von Mackensen, afterwards Field-Marshal. Its task was to break the Russian front. This was successfully accomplished at the battle of Gorlice, which led to the complete collapse of the Russian line, and to the fall of Przemysl, Ivangorod, Lemberg, Warsaw, and Brest Litovsk. For this success Von Seeckt received the rank of general and the order *Pour le Mérite*. His next task, still as C.G.S. to Field-Marshal von Mackensen, was the destruction of Serbia. The Austro-German army crossed the Danube, joined forces with the Bulgarians, and conquered the country in two months.

General von Seeckt continued in this post until June, 1916, devoting himself to the consolidation of the Bulgarian front before Salonica and to the maintenance of communications with Turkey. He was recalled to Galicia in consequence of the reverse on the Austrian front caused by Brussiloff's offensive. As C.G.S. to the Austrian Archduke Karl, afterwards Emperor, he succeeded in bringing the Russian advance to a halt. When Rumania entered the war it fell to the Archduke's army group to defend Hungary against the combined Russian and Rumanian advance.

In December, 1917, General von Seeckt was sent to Turkey as C.G.S. to the Turkish army in the field, his task being to hold the threatened fronts as long as possible. These duties took him to Palestine, the Euphrates, and the Taurus Mountains.

When the war was drawing to an end and the British Fleet lay ready to enter the Dardanelles, General von Seeckt made his way home via the Black Sea, the Ukraine, and Poland.

New duties were awaiting him there. He first had to make arrangements for the return of German troops from Russia and to prevent an advance of the Bolsheviks. Then he was sent to Versailles with the German peace delegation, being afterwards entrusted with the reconstruction of the German Army according to the provisions of the peace treaty. He took part in the negotiations in Spa and London, and then, as Commander-in-Chief, gave the new German Army its present form, retiring in the autumn of 1926.

GILBERT WATERHOUSE

INTRODUCTION

BURIAL OF MARS IN 1881

MARS still lies sprawling where he fell when he was kicked out of Olympus on November 11th, 1918. The moment he stirs, that moment his former vassals pour out streams of propaganda bullets upon him from every printing press in Europe and the U.S.A. Under this heavy barrage of Treaties, Tracts, Pacts, Protocols, Conferences and Shell-shock books, all seems quiet on the Western Front. But there are other fronts on which, obviously, Mars is “no deid yet.”

When, in 1881, Wolseley struck the words “92nd Highlanders” out of the Army List, Officers and men buried an effigy of their battalion to the skirl of the war pipes and to the glare of the flickering torches, and upon the tombstone they carved those words “Ninety-Twa no deid yet.” Nor is Mars. Any day we may read about him marching quite openly with his squint-eyed armies along the Yang-tse river, or placing fresh wreaths upon his statues to the bomb-throwers of Sarajevo. Are we quite sure he did not disguise himself as a Quaker and so slip into the Five Powers Naval Delimitation Conference? The Three Power Pact which came out of it has an

uncomfortable resemblance to the Three Emperors' Holy Alliance. Are we three going to try to dominate Europe? Or, are we not? Wiser, perhaps, would we be were we to turn to General von Seeckt who maintains that one-sided disarmament is worse than no disarmament, and that the short cut to the Millennium lies in the recognition of the fact that small armies may be made more effective than big armies.

There are other reasons why we should study these "Thoughts of a Soldier." Not only are they chips from a German workshop (*fas est et ab hoste docere*) ; not only do they include wise saws from a Chief of the General Staff whose experiences in that capacity have covered wider fields of action than those of any other living man, but they happen also to possess value for the man of peace as well as for the militarist. The militarist would like to be ready down to the last gaiter button. His motto is, "*Si vis pacem para bellum.*" If you want peace prepare for war. In von Seeckt's book he will find out how he can keep the standards flying and the hearts of his people high even when every obstacle is placed in the way of being ready. The pacifist on the other hand seems to see that the militarist's motto almost inevitably embodies one of the three catastrophes—bankruptcy, revolution or war. Once you begin to prepare, others will try and go one better. You pay your billions and you take your choice of the three catastrophes. Therefore the Quakers never made any distinction between preparing for war and war itself, for they

believe preparation and practice are merely different stages of the same thing—merely the larva-form and the imago-form of the Devil. When the drums beat and the girls begin to post little white feathers, it will be too late for protests. Mrs. Snowden, Queen of the Wireless (may she soon be crowned in succession to Clarendon), has broadcast on this subject, and listeners-in have gone to bed taking with them as a comfortable night-cap her assurance that women all the world over stood solid against war and *would not have it!* But when everyone awoke next morning they remembered that she was only speaking for her own generation. With each passing year millions of girls are either coming into the vote or into possession of other bright young people's hearts. There are still three of us alive who remember Stanhope Gate on that Sunday morning when they heard one of the most beautiful women in London say that if there was any more hesitation about the mobilization she would kill the War Minister with her own hands. A large order! Yes, but she was a large woman. Were I only a year or two younger I would write a war-guilt book in which not a man in authority except Sir Edward Grey, Haldane and the Kaiser would be quite responsible for anything he did or did not do, during July, 1914—and indeed—I'm not quite so sure about Haldane. All the other peace breakers of my war-guilt book would be women. Not many historians have had the nerve to show up those masked Amazons; Homer did so—also

Shakespeare—but not many. Now, however, when women vote : wear *retroussé* kilts and spring on to racing buses as a jaguar leaps upon a galloping tapir, it is preposterous of writers to go on handling them as delicately as if they still wore corsets and crinolines. In all these war-guilt papers ; in all these Blue Books, White Books and Yellow Books ; there's not a whisper which would lead the new generation of women to know—and knowing, to struggle against—the fact that nature has implanted in them something whereby they are stirred to the roots of their being by the spectacle of men fighting. (“For a good battle to be fought there must be some woman to give it power.”—O. HENRY.)

There is only one way offering some chances of escape—disarmament. How many murders would never have been committed had there not been an automatic in a drawer or a bottle of weed killer in the kitchen? There is room in the world for very large measures of disarmament ; there is also room for the ending of that curse, worse than the seven plagues of Egypt rolled into one, which for the past hundred and fifty years or so has distorted the mentality of Europe ; i.e. conscription. After Jena Germany became the classic home of this tragic system whereby every year the adolescents of a nation are compulsorily inoculated with a heavy dose of the war bacillus. To-day it is again Germany, under General von Seeckt, which is showing the conscript nations of Europe the best way out. In this book by the

General we shall find a nation maintaining law and order within her own borders, and even interposing as the one great bulwark between Civilization and Asiatic barbarism, armed only with a tiny voluntary service navy and a minute voluntary service army, both worked out for her down to the smallest details, not by herself but by her ex-enemies, the eminent military advisers to the Versailles Conference. We knew already how German brains had conjured a pocket battleship out of seemingly impossible limitations, but here we learn for the first time from the creator thereof how a seemingly incongruous force of twenty-one infantry regiments and eighteen cavalry regiments has been worked up into an original little army. Whenever the visitor of to-day goes to Germany he may see, if he keeps his eyes open, a small detachment guard-mounting or a cavalry orderly carrying a despatch. If further the visitor happens to be a soldier, he will note, with surprise, that these samples of the German army seem even better than the old conscript soldiers of pre-war days. If, still further, the visitor happens to have the "lingo" so that he can chat with one or two of these young fellows, he will find that the German soldier's spirit stands as high and that he is far more proficient as an individual than he was in those palmy days of 1871 when I witnessed the return of the victorious Guardsmen into the city of Berlin. General von Seeckt has done this, and this is exactly what the wiser men of peace want to learn ; i.e. the art of

reducing armies whilst raising the relative standard of efficiency. From the first it has been prophesied by the humble writer of this preface that the over-harsh restrictions in German armaments could only result in setting German brains to work at springing some military surprise upon the existing order, as in 1866 the needle-gun emerged to destroy Austria. Anything might emerge. So far (so far as we know) nothing more formidable than a pocket battleship and a pocket Army has emerged, and The Invention is still in the incubator—but we are “asking for it.” War is more likely to issue than peace from so-called disarmament conferences where all struggle to maintain their own quota at the highest pitch possible, agreeing only on the most drastic cutting down of the forces of ex-enemies. As von Seeckt says:

“The risk of war lies essentially in the inequality of military forces, which leads the stronger power to secure its political interest by the threat or the exercise of violence against the weaker. A guarantee of peace, therefore, lies less in the reduction of armaments than in the observance of agreed proportions. An effort towards this end must not be too ambitious. The real, effective military force of a country lies in the size of its population and in its wealth, and these forces are not susceptible of limitation. It is, however, feasible to bring the available peace strength of one army into such a relation with the peace strength of another that no state has a force at its disposal which is superior to the combined forces of several other states. Such an adjustment would enhance the general feeling of security, just as the increase of security by treaty favours in turn the reduction of armaments.

“It is necessary to distinguish between offensive and defensive armament. Any attempt to take from a state all possibility of self-defence or to restrict that possibility increases the feeling of insecurity in that state and thereby increases the risk of war.

"A defenceless neighbour is the strongest inducement to war; reciprocal adjustment of armaments, therefore, seems to be the first attainable stage on the road to permanent peace."

Von Seeckt's chapter, "Modern Armies," is specially interesting, giving us as it does his ideas on the fighting of the future. This, he holds, will "lie in the employment of mobile armies, relatively small but of high quality rendered distinctly more effective by the addition of aircraft." The principle of the levy in mass, he more than hints, has worked itself out. Those military students who may have read my "Soul and Body of an Army," written ten years ago, will remember, perhaps, my prevision of small, voluntary service, super-mobile armies, which would begin and end a war in one desperate battle of hours, days before the big national armies of Territorials or Conscripts could possibly get into contact. These last would play the ignoble rôle played by infantry in the Middle Ages ; who, as soon as one side had won the cavalry encounter, were ridden down like sheep by the victorious horsemen. There are several millions alive to-day in England who may see this happen but, of course, in writing it I did not for a moment imagine the English would believe me. Nor did they, for a moment. But they may believe von Seeckt, especially as he goes so much more by the ground. His Excellency is careful to explain that his theories must not be regarded as deriving any authority from his experiences as organizer of the German Reichswehr. Everyone will accept the

General's claim for originality in so far as other German literary works, or the writings of foreigners, are in question, but will his contention that he owes nothing to his own past hold water? Hardly. Imagination is like a wide-ranging peregrine falcon which will stoop at any wild-fowl, but she must return to her nest at night and that nest, in the case of His Excellency is—the Reichswehr! *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, and even imagination is no exception to the axiom.

Amongst the points which will interest British readers is one which ought really to make them remember they are not quite alone in the world and, so remembering, to reconsider a fatal decision. On the whole “there appears,” to General von Seeckt, “to be little evidence of change in the practical application of the experience gained in the war compared with the principles of the pre-war period.” All the same there *is* one special aspect of to-day’s reaction to yesterday which has caught his observant eye: “America is extending her system of military training for the young”; Italy “is showing extraordinary energy” in this same sphere; in France, “the most thorough preparations have been made” for the military training of the young: so also in Russia. The Continent of Europe, *en bloc*, is trying to get some sense of discipline worked into the children of the new generation. This then is, so far, the one great change in the application of principles formed upon the experiences of the war. The General does not mention England!

He should have done so. We are the exception without which rules are not worth mentioning. Far from trying to work a spirit of discipline and self-sacrifice into the ideals of the young generation, we have chosen the present moment to scrap our cadet system : and our Army Council does not resign ! Why should it ? There is going to be no more war, so say the pundits. Gandhi says so too ; he is for peace at any price. Yet still the moment seems perilous as it knocks at the door of the palace of the Governor-General in Council. Listen attentively to that knocking. “Govern or go !” it seems to say ; “Govern or go, Governor-General !” And no reply comes, except that, here in safe England, we abolish the cadets.

There are not many of these “Thoughts of a Soldier” with which my own thoughts do not harmonize. Only in the opening chapter upon “Catchwords” and the chapter entitled “Modern Cavalry” does the band, to my uncultured ear, seem to play here and there a few false notes. Are the General’s “Catchwords” really what we call catchwords ? I don’t know what the original German word may have been but, anyway, the instances given are rather what we would call “isms” ; phrases ; or just simply military slang. Words, even groups of words, are like very small caps which cannot be stretched to fit all the thoughts within a human skull. But, for a walk in the street, they are better than a bald head except when they are so old-fashioned that they

provoke ridicule. Take now the first instance given on page 5, "Pacifism." Here General von Seeckt argues that "there is no reason why the soldier's attitude towards war should not be called pacifism." I agree if he means "lover of peace" by pacifism. He then goes on to state that "the concept 'pacifism' covers the wide field between the natural love of peace cherished by wise men and the servile subjection implied by peace at any price"; "It is therefore," he concludes, "a catchword which has no clear meaning." Again I agree, but would not leave it at that. It is the duty of a famous man like von Seeckt to stamp a meaning upon an ambiguous word rather than to complain. No doubt, a soldier must run a special risk when he ventures to touch even the fringe of anything outside soldiering. He is a *Fachmann* or *Homme de métier*, and only so long as he sticks to that will he be gently handled. On page 4 His Excellency remarks that "literary people are agreeably surprised or impressed when they find a soldier occasionally quoting Goethe or even Greek." That may be so in Berlin; not in London. On the contrary, in London there is nothing annoys people more than versatility. London editors are quite decent to soldiers and, so long as they write upon war, hand them over to other old soldiers turned critics who behave very correctly to anyone above the rank of major. But let them touch on literature, and these same editors will pass them on to a ferocious band of Bashi Bazouks, who rush upon the

unfortunate intruder with drawn fountain pens and stab him in ten times as many places as the conspirators stabbed Cæsar. However, none the less, I will throw a light upon the word pacifism which should spread as it emanates from the man who, at the present moment, has at least as great a power as any other individual in Europe to give effect to his ideas on that subject.

A few weeks ago I attended a pacifist banquet. Next me sat the Individual. Turning round to look at the company I remarked to him : “ These people do not look to me like pacifists.” “ What is a pacifist ? ” said he. “ I constantly hear the word used but, to me, it has no clear meaning.” (Exactly what General von Seeckt maintains.) I replied, “ A pacifist is a man who refuses service,” to which remark he with sharp decision rejoined : “ Then certainly I am no pacifist.” So there we are. That is England’s view, at present anyway, for the ship sails according to the view of the man at the helm. In the cloudy region where these “ isms ”—militarisms and pacifisms—live, we have those who love war (a far more numerous sect than is imagined) ; those who love peace (a far smaller number than is imagined) ; the pacifists who refuse service sometimes for conscience sake, or, more rarely, because they are physically cowards, and the defeatists who are always moral cowards. A lover of peace is only sometimes a pacifist and, curiously enough, rarely a defeatist.

The chapter on “ Modern Cavalry ” opens with the

sentence : “ Catchwords are fatal.” General von Seeckt then gives two of these fatal expressions. One : “ Cavalry is superfluous ” ; the other : “ The mechanization of war.” Now if he had said that the first of these was too sweeping and the other too loose ; or, if he had used the word *fatal* in its German sense of “ awkward,” no one would have differed. But, taking his statement as it stands, I must say that the only catchword in my experience which has ever proved fatal to modern cavalry is the catchword *arme blanche*. The glamour of the bright sword which used to wave the galloping squadrons on to victory, now leads them only into the death-trap. Millions of pounds of money ; millions of pounds of oats have those gallant horsemen cost—and lost—during the years ’14—’18. But perhaps von Seeckt does not mean shock cavalry ? Perhaps he means Mounted Infantry, a force in whose pre-eminence I have ever believed since nearly fifty years ago I wrote my first military treatise entitled “ The Fighting of the Future,” maintaining that victory would belong to the nation which exploited the value of a force of super-marksmen mounted on horses. In support of that interpretation of von Seeckt’s proposition, the following sentence is available on page 91 : “ No longer like Frederick at the end of the day do we hurl our jingling squadrons upon the tottering foe.” No indeed ; better not : they might still have one of those machine guns with them which refuses to totter. But how about his final sentence

(page 107) when, taking leave of "Modern Cavalry," he says, "Its lances may still flaunt their pennants with confidence in the wind of the future." Lances ! Pennants ! Here, surely, we seem once more to find that wicked old catchword in the saddle.

However this may be, I think the point ought to be threshed out and settled once for all, now, when we have the experiences of three big wars still vividly alive in the minds of so many living soldiers.

As therefore I should like to carry German military opinion with me, let me remind General von Seeckt that one of the few German officers who showed intuitive *flair* throughout the Great War ; who happened also to be in a position to give a certain weight to his views, and who had been through the Manchurian War of 1904-5, was a certain Max Hoffmann. We know what happened to any British officer who was so much as suspected by French or Haig of unorthodox views about shock cavalry, but students do not know, and perhaps even the Germans do not know, what Hoffmann thought (whatever he may have thought it expedient to say) about shock cavalry. Hoffmann and I were both attached to Kuroki's army, and saw rather too much of one another for the most disagreeable six months of Hoffmann's existence. For he adored rich food, good wine and creature comforts. A *bento* of rice and a small pickled octopus washed down with a pint of muddy water and eaten in company with every type of disgusting insect that sucks the blood of man, was irritating both

to the stomach and nerves of Hoffmann. Hoffmann, indeed, often became quite childish under the strain of these discomforts, and when I, as *doyen*, was given the better Chinese hovel to doss down into, was ready to challenge me to a duel. But we never did fight. We became friends. From me he caught the habit of keeping a day to day diary in war. When he expressed surprise at seeing me scribbling into a Lett's Diary even on the afternoon of the morning my despatches had gone home, I explained to him what had happened during the session of the Royal Commission on the South African War, and how officers who had kept a day to day diary were able to make some stand against the inevitable efforts of the politicians to turn them into scape-goats. This is why, fortunately, he kept a similar diary during the Great War. My example, too (so I flatter myself) inspired him with the "cheek" which enabled him to turn Ludendorff's ugly "Frögenau" into the musically sounding "Tannenberg," for he had been greatly amused at the Coal Mines of Yentai, about Christmas 1904, when I told him how I had invented the picturesque battle-title "Diamond Hill" and pasted it firmly on to history in despite of both French and Pole Carew, who fought tooth and nail for "Donkershoek." However, my point is this : Hoffmann saw the Japanese shock cavalry cooking rice for their own Artillery and Infantry, who were desperately fighting the battle of Liao Yang ! There was no other use for them. Ever since then he knew that, on the

Western Front, there would be no room for sabres or lances. As for Rennenkampf, in Manchuria we both of us had his character sheet by heart. The story that Hoffmann is said to have related—namely, that he was confident Rennenkampf would not march to Samsonoff's assistance because they had boxed one another's ears on the Mukden Railway Station—may have really been so related by him. For he had ever a sarcastic and witty way with him. But actually this tale does him some injustice. Helped by the Japanese General Staff he had closely studied Rennenkampf's character and methods long before the battle of Mukden, and he had quite made up his mind as to the very limited range of that officer's initiative in times of crisis. So also had he made up his mind about cavalry. He was the first person to read that phrase or catchword which was predestined to do me so much harm, when I compared shock cavalry on a modern battlefield to the sending of the elephants of the Emperor Porus over the top. So there it is. We have the experiences of South Africa, Manchuria and the Great War to guide us. Are we still going to try and keep the rifle in a secondary position to the *arme blanche*? Put up the bright swords on the walls of cathedrals and museums, say I, and leave the fluttering pennants to adorn the lances of the Russky Kasaks.

To serious students of the science of war the most valuable chapter will be that in which von Seeckt—declaring it to be a “most difficult subject”—

describes the "influence of the C.G.S. on operations." How difficult may be best realized by the Briton who will accept my word for it that neither Buller nor Kitchener ever understood, or even had the patience to begin to try and understand, the meaning of those words "Chief of the General Staff."

The subject itself is not really so "most difficult"; it is only its acceptance by a man with the temperament of a Commander which is difficult. Otherwise, why is it not used by the politician? Why, when the P.M. and his Cabinet are struggling with the exigencies of the passing hour, have they not a *man of their own party*, supported by a powerful staff, occupying the position of Sir Maurice Hankey and calmly looking over the tops of the mountains of present troubles into what dangers *to their own party* are brewing in the valleys beyond. Why? Because of the intense individualism of a British Prime Minister. He will not surrender an iota of his individualism in advance by permitting anyone else to explore the ground and make plans like those of a Schlieffen or Moltke. The nearest approach to that sort of thing was the late Lord Younger who, charming as he was, was by no means an eagle. Lagging far behind the soldiers, then, the politicians possess no safeguard to prevent a Prime Minister at the opening of a General Election from taking a bomb out of his own pocket and throwing it into the middle of his own Army, as did Buller on the eve of the battle of Colenso. Perhaps I might help the Briton to grasp this C.G.S.

nettle by explaining to him further that, whereas, neither Buller nor Kitchener were ever seized with the idea of the true status and sphere of activity of a Chief of the General Staff, Roberts who understood it very well rejected the principle all the more strongly owing to his reluctance to delegate power. This it will be found is the last flaw of the Superman ; a human being cannot become a Superman unless he knows where and how to trust ; to decentralize and delegate.

Should General von Seeckt himself ever run his eye over these lines he will be astonished to learn that when, on the evening of December 15th, 1899, Sir Redvers Buller announced verbally to his bewildered senior officers how he was going to fight that classic instance of the battle of "How-Not-to-do-it"—in other words, Colenso—he had solved in advance this "most difficult subject" of the Staff by leaving the said Staff behind. When Buller issued his verbal instructions for, and fought, the battle of Colenso he was supported only by his personal Staff Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel F. Stopford, Military Secretary, and two or three aide-de-camps. Thus, next morning, December 16th, when Buller sent his heliogram into Ladysmith, no one that side of the Tugela knew of its contents except Lieutenant-Colonel Stopford and the signaller. All Englishmen remember the heliogram, but General von Seeckt may not, so I remind him that it suggested to General Sir George White that he should burn his ciphers, destroy his

guns, fire away his ammunition, and that he and his 12,000 men should then make the best terms possible with the General of the besieging forces, after giving "me" (Buller) time to fortify "myself" on the Tugela. This could hardly have happened had he had a Chief of the General Staff or even his Chief Staff Officer, Sir Herbert Miles, and Captain Charles à Court Repington upon the ground. In the cases of Roberts and Kitchener I can speak from personal experience. Never once during the whole of his service in South Africa was Kitchener used by Roberts as a Chief of the General Staff or even (as that nomenclature had not yet been adopted nor its full functions) as Chief Staff Officer. As the relations of these two personages were friendly, and as they met daily when they happened to be in camp together, it may be assumed that they discussed the situations as they arose and that they were generally aware of one another's opinions—but that's about the most of it. Whenever and wherever an opportunity offered itself Roberts shot Kitchener off. Off he would fly to make inquiries into the railway block and straighten out the tangle ; to report upon the state of affairs in the Cape Colony ; or, actually, on one occasion, *to take command* (here General von Seeckt will get a shock) at the first class battle of Paardeburg. From a long letter written me a few years later by Kitchener concerning the conduct of this very battle it is perfectly clear that at that period, by mutual consent of Roberts and Kitchener, the whole conception of Staff duties

and Command functions was being turned into something entirely distinct, i.e. the conception of a Commander-in-Chief and a Second in Command. But a Chief of the General Staff or even a Chief Staff Officer is not a second in command. He is not a second-string—an *alter ego*. On the contrary, he should be most carefully chosen by the Emperor or P.M. or War Minister, or whoever may be the Head of the Higher Direction, to complement his Commander-in-Chief's qualities. He should be specially strong, not where the Commander is strongest but where he is weakest.

When in his turn Kitchener became Commander-in-Chief, and I was sent out as his Chief Staff Officer, we were socially in much closer contact than Kitchener had been with Roberts. I lived in the same house, had my meals at the same table, and went out riding with him, or played bad billiards with him, whenever he sought brief relief from his daily grind. No contact could have been closer. But, so far as business was concerned, I fulfilled very much the same functions with Kitchener as he had formerly performed towards Roberts. I was his Second in Command. There was no idea of my qualities, such as they were, supplementing the qualities of Kitchener, such as they were supposed to be. I relieved Kitchener of parts of his work which he disliked, and ran them entirely as if I was Boss, never asking him a question. I ran the whole show when he went away to Natal or the Cape on inspection. I, too, was given my battle,

or rather, was given my chance and took my chance as Commander of seven small columns at Roodeval which ended the war. But Kitchener was never influenced by me, or only very, very rarely. The only way I, as C.G.S., ever set my mark upon the conduct of business was by doing things I should not have done, by braving his anger ; by commanding in battle, or by departing from his wishes. Thus, amongst other things, I ran the Press. Well, I had instructions to tell them nothing. Often I told them as much as I could chancing a row when a month later the mails would arrive from London. But in all this there never was any approach to the fulfilment of General von Seeckt's ideal, where he says, on page 116 : "It is only by the appointment of the right Chief of Staff that a Commander's brilliant talents for leadership can be fully displayed, or that compensation can be found for his weaknesses."

So now mark Nemesis at work. Towards the end of the chapter several of these old actors are hauled once more on to the front of the stage and stuck under the searchlights of the Dardanelles. At home Kitchener is driving his one-horse shay at the gallop. In Douglas he has a good Adjutant-General who has been turned by Asquith into a bad Chief of the General Staff. Kitchener turns him into an absolute nullity. After Douglas's sad death, Kitchener gets Wolfe Murray to replace him ; a wise, experienced officer though not very well adapted for the General Staffship. He ignores him so completely that Wolfe

Murray ceases to exist ; first, as a Staff Officer ; secondly, altogether. When I write from the Dardanelles expressing my strong opinion in very strong words that Reed is not well suited to run in double harness with Stopford as his chief of General Staff, Reed comes out with Stopford. So now ; are we going to learn from the past or are we not ? I trust we shall : I believe we shall. Anyway, these last pages have been written in that pious hope.

Finally, this is a good book ; closely, yet not too heavily, packed with knowledge. In it the great Arranger of Coincidences has fired an incidental shaft of satire at the very idea of the late bloody war between Germany and England. To judge by his portrait, General von Seeckt bears a recognizable resemblance to our own well-trusted Chief of the General Staff, General Sir George Milne. Neither hero will feel flattered ; that is the way with resemblances, but features are facts and photos are photographs. These two men who fought against one another at Salonika are as like as two peas, and although they happen to have come out of two different pods that will, some day, seem to St. Peter rather a poor excuse for having tried so long, and so hard, to cut one another's throats.

IAN HAMILTON

May, 1930.

CATCHWORDS

CATCHWORDS

THERE are three things against which the human mind struggles in vain : stupidity, bureaucracy, and catchwords. All three are perhaps alike inasmuch as they are necessary. I prefer to leave the hopeless fight against stupidity to my more sagacious contemporaries ; admit unqualified defeat in my struggle with military bureaucracy ; and propose in these pages to join battle with a few catchwords in the military sphere at home.

If I admit the necessity for catchwords I mean that they are necessary for all those who are unable to think for themselves. This necessity or utility of catchwords is thus unimpugnably demonstrated, and the following observations have no other object than to stimulate some one or other of my aforesaid contemporaries to think for himself and, whenever a catchword is uttered, to confront him with the question, Is this true ?

Catchwords and trite phrases are not the same thing as quotations, although not unrelated ; for quotations also tend to have ridiculous and dangerous associations. At the same time it is undoubtedly convenient to find that someone else has already expressed the same thought in a happy and generally accepted form ; not to mention the fact that literary

people are agreeably surprised or impressed when they find a soldier occasionally quoting Goethe or even Greek, suggesting thereby an intellectual capacity in excess of that required for reading the drill book. That is why I sometimes make quotations myself.

Catchwords are not the same as legendary sayings, although again not unrelated, except that the latter belong to the sphere of things venerable and exalted. It seems absolutely necessary that one should believe in gods and heroes and not destroy legends. The word "one" is itself a catchword, because it masks the fear to say "I." Speaking for myself, therefore, I find it very inconvenient that I may no longer regard Nero simply as the imperial monster who used to go to bed by the light of a burning Christian, but rather as a wise and somewhat peculiar modern dictator. I am thankful that special circumstances and my own predilection allowed me, at an early date, to see in the Iron Chancellor the vivid mind and the delicate hand which wielded the rapier in combat and not the hammer. The hammer is the instrument of unintelligent obliteration, but the rapier is elusive, it withdraws and parries and bides its time to strike at last with the delicate precision of well-tempered steel.

In my own professional military sphere I make war on catchwords and slogans for the very definite reason that here their effect can and indeed must be deadly, in the literal sense of the word, because thousands of human lives are sacrificed to military catchwords—assuredly not from any evil intention, but simply from

lack of independent thought. It is with a sense of responsibility for the future, which is much more important than the present, that I now propose to test the validity of a few military catchwords. Then, perhaps, others will reflect before acting on them.

PACIFISM. The man who has formed a clear notion of the nature of war, of its necessities, requirements and consequences, to wit, the *soldier*, will take a far more serious view of the potentialities of war than the politician or the business man who coldly weighs its advantages and disadvantages. After all, it is not so difficult to sacrifice one's own life, but the professional duty of risking the lives of others weighs heavily on the conscience. The soldier, having experience of war, fears it far more than the doctrinaire who, being ignorant of war, talks only of peace ; for the soldier has gazed into war's bloodshot eyes, he has observed from his point of vantage the battle-fields of a world war, he has had to witness the agonies of nations, his hair has turned grey over the ashes of countless burned homesteads and he has borne the responsibility for the life and death of thousands. The figure of the sabre-rattling, fire-eating general is an invention of poisoned and unscrupulous political strife, a figure welcome to stupid comic papers, a catchword personified. There is no reason why the soldier's attitude towards war should not be called "pacifism." It is a pacifism established on knowledge and born of a sense of responsibility, but it is not the pacifism engendered by national abasement or by a hazy

internationalism. The soldier will be the first to welcome any effort to diminish the potentialities of war, but he does not march down the street to the slogan of "No more war!" because he knows that war and peace are decided by higher powers than princes, statesmen, parliaments, treaties and alliances—they are decided by the eternal laws which govern the growth and decay of nations. But the kind of pacifist who would deliberately make his own nation defenceless in such fateful encounters, who prefers to weaken it in alliance with a hostile neighbour rather than support his fellow-countrymen in preparation for legitimate resistance, deserves, as he always did, to be hanged to the nearest lamp-post, were it only a moral one.

The concept "pacifism" covers a wide field, from the natural love of peace cherished by experienced and responsibly minded men to servile subjection to the will for peace at any price; it is therefore a catchword which has no clear meaning.

IMPERIALISM. If we disregard the dangerous association of this word with *imperator*, there remains its application to a nation's unseemly lust for power and territory, its endeavour to gain the *imperium mundi*. Unfortunately the word is often used in public to designate and confute every strong demonstration of vitality, every expression of the will to survive in the great struggle of nations, and so it becomes a catchword in the conflict of opinions. It is only the enemy who is moved by "imperialism,"

and his open or secret plans of conquest are ostensibly regarded as provocative of resistance. Only the Englishman is permitted to view the conception of "empire" as a reflection of legitimate pride in a might which encompasses the earth ; in any other nation "imperialism" clearly implies a treasonable menace to the peace of the world.

MILITARISM. In the daily encounters in the political ring this word has almost ceased to be a catchword ; it has become almost a term of abuse, and is placed in the same category as "accursed old *régime*," "sergeant-major tone," "garrison spirit," and the other similar parrot cries with which the new era zealously and tactfully speeds the departed age to the grave.

It is hard to say what "militarism" really is ; it is just a catchword and nothing more. I assert that militarism made first Prussia, then Germany great and strong ; I can admit that militarism was uncongenial and inconvenient to many, yet I must maintain that it enabled us to resist a hostile world for four years and that it subsequently, by its inculcation of lessons in discipline, repelled the waves of Bolshevism, with the result that the Prussia and Germany of to-day owe their survival to the old militarism. By militarism, therefore—let me add that the wretched word is not from my vocabulary—I understand something quite different from what my neighbour understands by it. He thinks it means the domination of the country by a military caste—which never existed among us—a

chauvinistic, vindictive, peace-destroying, military camarilla, a thing that leads only a fictitious existence as a catchword in newspaper articles. Between these two conceptions of "militarism" lie various others, the subjective justification of which I have no intention of denying; but I imagine that the catchword "militarism" has been discredited—though only in so far as it applies to German militarism. France is proudly raising her sons to be a "nation armée." Is that not militarism? And America, while unfolding the banner of peace with complete self-reliance, permits *officers of the general staff* to lecture on war and the art of war in her universities, musters her educated youth in Officers' Training Corps and practises mobilization with her industries. I should like to call this "patriotism," but in Germany it would be "militarism."

On May 29th, 1919, at the Peace Conference in Versailles, the German Empire declared that, in evidence of its intention to renounce for ever all *imperialistic* and *militaristic* aims, it agreed to the demand for the destruction of its armed forces.

Catchwords are fatal.

WAR IS A CONTINUATION OF POLICY BY OTHER MEANS. This quotation from Clausewitz's notes for the eighth book of his "Theory of War" has become a platitude. Its danger lies in unintelligent application and in the possibility of its use as a premise to the most erroneous conclusions. Clausewitz, of whom too it might be said that he should be "praised less

and read more,"* takes many pages to explain his dictum. The sentence itself does not run precisely as generally quoted. Clausewitz says that war is nothing but a continuation of political intercourse with the introduction of other means, and it is clear from his argumentation that he does not intend to enunciate a dogma, but is merely drawing conclusions from his historical studies and his personal experience. He comes to the conclusion that the more energetic and deliberate the policy of a state is, the more energetic will be its conduct of war, and this conclusion is explicable in a man who witnessed the triumph of Napoleon's methods of warfare over those of his opponents. After the experiences of our own day, Clausewitz's dictum cannot be accepted without qualification, although it must be admitted that political presumptions and political preparations have their influence on the conduct of war. Clausewitz's arguments on the continuation of political and diplomatic activity while war is in progress are valid for all times and cases. I have expressed my views on "The relations of statesman and soldier" in the essay so entitled and can refer the reader to it now. The quotation from Clausewitz has been misunderstood if, as a mere platitude, it obscures Clausewitz's own doctrine of the true nature of war, which has for its object the destruction of the enemy. Properly

* "Wer wird nicht einen Klopstock loben?
Doch wird ihn jeder lesen?—Nein.
Wir wollen weniger erhoben
Und fleissiger gelesen."—(LESSING).

understood, the words quoted mean that war has no existence *per se*, but is joined by laws of its own to the organic life of nations. War influences policy as it is influenced by policy. The world does not return to its former condition at the conclusion of war ; it is confronted with new problems.

Clausewitz, the great philosopher of war, himself becomes a catchword when we piously repeat his pronouncements without studying his meaning.

CANNAE. No catchword has done us more harm than this. It is a typical example of the way in which the truth in a catchword is perverted. The very fact that Schlieffen had to search so far back in the history of war in order to find a useful example of the ideal battle ought to suggest that his object in using the name "Cannae" was to find the most significant form for the principle he was defending and at the same time a striking title for his essay. But how has his doctrine been interpreted ? If we give the conception "Cannae" its right meaning, we find that it implies insistence on that method of warfare which leads to the destruction of the enemy. This is to be most surely attained by a vigorous envelopment of his two flanks—see Cannae. Two conditions are required for this ideal solution : superiority of force at the decisive points and an enemy who allows himself to be enveloped on both flanks. If these conditions do not present themselves, then—and herein lies the logical modification of the ideal—it must at all costs be kept in mind that any form of envelopment, if only

on one flank, is the surest road to an annihilating success. We need not go back as far as Cannae to prove the efficacy of envelopment. Should no possibility of any kind of envelopment arise—and we have known cases of the kind—then the general cannot simply declare that he is at his wits' end ; he will be acting quite in the spirit of Count Schlieffen, if with a clear object in view, he launches his masses at the most effective point—even though it be in a frontal attack, for the success of which Schlieffen, we must admit, coined the sarcastic term “ordinary victory.” Let us be honest ! How many battles, great and small, have been fought out in manœuvres and on maps without any attempt at envelopment, single or double, or without its execution, when it was always perfectly obvious that the director of the operation had planned it with a view to such envelopment ? Was there ever any chance in these exercises of a “break-through” being successful ? It has been a distinct proof, to my mind, of the power of catchwords and of military precepts in general that in post-war manœuvres the desire for envelopment at any price and the extension of the front until it ceased to be a front at all had to be combated as though there had never been a war to teach us. The consequences which this craze for envelopment produced in the war were inevitable. Schlieffen himself, in his plan for a war with France, renounced all attempt at double envelopment in favour of re-inforcement of the decisive right wing. The principle of seeking a

decision by envelopment was transferred from tactical operations to operations on a large scale, but the condition necessary for a decisive success, i.e. the release of all available forces against one single object—in this case envelopment by the right wing—was not fulfilled, and suddenly in the middle of the operation, which still pursued the original plan of this envelopment, although with diminished energy, there appeared this “Cannae” notion, a journeyman’s bungling attempt to improve the master’s plan. It brought no success. The constant striving for tactical envelopment on the right wing had the result that the great strategic aim of envelopment on a large scale was forgotten. When we finally succeeded in making the great “break-through” in the East, the higher command had the greatest difficulty in accustoming the troops and the subordinate leaders to the unfamiliar conditions of this operation and in preventing them from wheeling in according to the popular idea of “crumpling up adjacent fronts” at a time when success lay in a steady advance. “Cannae” is still valid as an indication of the will to destroy, but for anyone who does not grasp its full sense, it will only be an empty and dangerous catchword.

WAR OF AGGRESSION. This conception has played a great part in recent political deliberations and is urgently in need of elucidation from the soldier’s point of view. Whether a war is an aggressive war or not is a political question or, if you like, a question of international law. It is doubtful whether the

question can be satisfactorily answered in every case ; it is doubtful even whether the term can be clearly defined. The question of war guilt—who began, i.e. who was the first to attack ?—will arise after every war and will always be decided according to the point of view of the interested party—and according to the result of the war. Precisely those who see in war only a continuation of policy by other means will have to admit that only a policy of aggression can lead to a war of aggression. Even a policy of aggression may be only a defensive policy at bottom, because it is inspired by the necessity for anticipating a still greater danger in the future. Bismarck has given his opinion of such preventive warfare, and the responsibility is borne by the statesman, who is exalted above theories and notions of law and owes no duty save to the welfare of his own people. The statesman will not be frightened by a catchword. If we try nowadays to exclude the “ war of aggression ” from the sphere of international relations, we thereby repudiate the dogma of “ continuation of policy by military means,” for policy will surely not be content to acquiesce in inactivity, in the renunciation of all aims which contemplate the acquisition of power. This being so, the statesman will soon find himself thwarted in some way or other, will deduce from this opposition a menace first to his plans, then to national prestige, and finally to the existence of the state itself and so, regarding his country as the party attacked, will engage in a war of defence. *Salvavi animam meam.* And now let the

O. C. Propaganda have his say for a space, and cry
Stop thief ! to salve the world's conscience.

The military conception of an aggressive war is fundamentally different from the political conception. Whoever shares my conviction that in 1914 we were waging, from the political point of view, a purely defensive war, will be compelled to regard attack at the decisive point as the only possible military means of securing a rapid and favourable decision. It is necessary to establish this fact now, when the higher command is reproached with its conduct of the war, in such a way as to imply that it had willed, prepared, and contrived the *political* war of aggression. Whoever insists that we ought to have awaited the enemy's attack in order to prove our peaceable policy, admits that he would rather have seen the war fought out in his own home than in France.

STRATEGY OF DESTRUCTION OR STRATEGY OF EXHAUSTION. This question has been raised in recent German military literature, and the great issue of the world war has been judged in accordance with this textbook heading. Thus the Hindenburg-Ludendorff régime is praised as the exemplification of the Clausewitz-Schlieffen doctrine of "destruction of enemy forces," whereas the Falkenhayn period is belittled as that of a feeble strategy of exhaustion. If these young writers have their eyes fixed on the goal of the destruction of the enemy with a view to their own military future, that is very gratifying, but they have misunderstood the nature of the Great War.

Late one evening during the war, after a certain serious decision had been taken, my chief coadjutor came to me full of doubt as to whether our decision had been right. "Let it be," I answered. "Only the military academies fifty years hence will know for certain whether we did right or not."

The way the Great War presents itself to me is this. We entered the war with the clear object before us of destroying the armed forces of our three opponents in the West. There was a well-grounded hope of attaining this object, of making the enemy ready for peace by destroying his armies, and of ending the war. It is another question whether the object was actually attainable or not, but it was our only object. We did not attain it. Then, with far less prospect of success, we tried to overthrow Russia. The victory was ours but our strength did not suffice to win the war. From this moment on, our means to pursue a strategy of destruction in the decisive military sense failed definitely and at an ever-increasing rate. Our position was like that of a besieged fortress, from which sorties can be made with the object of postponing capitulation. Our only hope was that our enemies, impressed by this desperate resistance, might, in the words of Bürger's ballad, grow weary of the tedious strife, soften their hard hearts, and make peace.*

* "Der König und die Kaiserin,
Des langen Haders müde,
Erweichten ihren harten Sinn
Und machten endlich Friede."

Every one of these sorties was conducted with the will to secure a decision, but it is the nature of a sortie that its object is limited. Even the necessary troops could only be placed temporarily at the disposal of the organizer. It seems presumptuous to me to judge those responsible for the conduct of the war by reference to a mere textbook phrase, to measure them, as it were, with a tailor's tape.

WAR AIMS. The danger of this phrase, which has been so much used and misused, lies in confusing war aims with the consequences of war. Our enemies had agreements among themselves formulating on broad lines the demands of the individual members of the alliance in the event of a favourable issue. On our side, as far as I know, there was only a formal agreement that each State was pledged to defend the integrity of the other as its own. That is no war aim. A war aim explains why policy involves a nation in war. France's war aim was not Alsace-Lorraine. The recovery of the two provinces was the natural consequence of a successful war. The French war aim was the overthrow and the enfeeblement, for as long a period as possible, of a dangerous neighbour. Russia's war aim was not Constantinople, but unlimited sovereignty over the east and south-east of Europe—a sovereignty which appeared to be threatened by Austria and Germany. Our war aim was the preservation of the German Empire, its frontiers and its power. If the war had ended with the *status quo ante*, that would have been a German

victory. It is, of course, intelligible and natural that consideration was given to the consequences which a great success might have produced and to the terms which we, in the event of victory, might impose on the vanquished. But it was dangerous and harmful to describe these desires, often thoroughly egoistic, as war aims. It gave the impression that we were waging war for the possession of the Briey basin or the Flemish coast, or for the extension of German influence to Lake Peipus. Should the result of the war have permitted us to impose terms, then wise statesmanship, on a good Nikolsburg model, might have extracted many things from the peace treaty which would have offered greater security for the future and compensation for damage suffered. But those things would have been the consequences, not the aims, of war. They are political, not military problems. There is no room for a Stinnes at General Head-quarters. The soldier knows only one aim of war : the destruction of the enemy forces.

I have been able to expose only a few of the innumerable catchwords here, nor did I wish to include more. Many such phantoms still haunt the world. There is one talisman against them—clear thinking.

SYMBOLS

FREDERICK'S DAY

January 24th, 1928

THE HONOUR OF A SOLDIER

" You speak of your honour. It lay in leading the army well . . ." writes Frederick the Great on August 12th, 1757, to his brother, the heir-apparent. This letter deserves to be read for more reasons than one. Nowhere has the peculiar honour of the soldier been more briefly or more clearly set forth, the honour both of the general and of the man in the front line, whom the King—to use his own words—had the honour to lead.

The soldier's honour lies in the discharge of his duty, in every rank and situation, no matter whether that rank be high or low, that situation easy or difficult, ordinary or extraordinary. Even in peace there is much silent heroism and self-control and much quiet endurance, which is often more difficult than the hot-blooded deed in war. But in war honour demands the utmost of a man ; it demands the conscious surrender of his life to his duty as a soldier. The soldier must be able to face his judge. This judge may be only his superior officer, some strict but just commander ; or the verdict of history ; but less

indulgent than either is the judge in a man's own breast, for every man is the last and highest judge of his own honour.

"That for which we hold ourselves in our hearts" still remains the soldier's highest possession, which enables him to endure "the toil and the pains."*

The higher the soldier rises on the military ladder, the graver becomes his duty ; not in itself, for it only changes form—and no man can do more than his duty—but because to his own duty and his own honour is added the responsibility for the duty and the honour of his subordinates. Responsibility grows to immensity ; at one time the lives and the honour of hundreds, of thousands, are at stake ; at another, the security of the state itself.

Therefore the King grows more and more severe, the higher the rank of the guilty man who, in his judgment, has failed in his duty. Herein lies the new and serious duty of the commander, the duty of severity for honour's sake.^{**} In this severity towards others lies the greatest severity towards himself ; it is harder for the leader to demand sacrifices of others than to offer them himself. The King makes this offering of severity, because his duty requires it, and for him duty and Prussia are one.

* "Wir, wir haben von seinem Glanz und Schimmer
Nichts als die Müh' und als die Schmerzen,
Und wofür wir uns halten in unserem Herzen."

SCHILLER, *Wallenstein's Lager*.

SCHLIEFFEN'S DAY

February 28th, 1928

GREAT personalities become concepts. Two separate pictures present themselves to the inquiring eye : the person and the concept. Caius Julius Cæsar, the consul of history, is one picture ; the concept "Cæsar" is another. King Frederick II of Prussia is not the same as "der alte Fritz" of popular memory or the "Fridericus" of our own day. There is a danger in this forming of concepts, for it is often unjust to the person ; a rigid concept takes the place of a rich life. There is something one-sided about a concept, for it easily leads to wrong conclusions concerning the *person*. On the other hand, it is only the very great whom time honours with this transformation of person into concept, and our respect is due to both.

If we strive to enlarge our knowledge and strengthen our will by the contemplation of great examples, we must make two things our own : knowledge of the man, gained from his deeds and words, and appreciation of the concept associated with his name. The result of this study will generally be that the man grows greater in our eyes, and the concept associated with his name changes. For our own profit we

must take up a personal attitude towards the great man.

Graf Schlieffen's nature exhibits a most highly clarified abstraction, touching us almost with the coldness of ice. Yet he incites us to assume this personal attitude towards himself, because there slumbers beneath the surface the hot passion of the will to lead. Graf Schlieffen is no concept for us ; he typifies in head and heart the continuous life of the German General Staff, the German soldier, the German nation. We will not allow him to become a mere petrified concept, a one-sided dogmatist, but we will seek in him and learn from him, in new and clear form, the old eternal rules of war.

Let us condense them into three sentences :

The destruction of the enemy is the goal of war, but there are many roads to this goal.

Every operation must be dominated by one simple clear idea. Everybody and everything must be subordinated to this idea.

Decisive force must be thrown in at the decisive point ; success is to be purchased only with sacrifice.

Let us take to heart these doctrines of Schlieffen, the man, and then the concept "Schlieffen" will be synonymous with Victory.

HINDENBURG

WHEN a personality of importance in the history of the world is encountered, the observer is compelled to ask in what form his image will be most faithfully preserved for posterity, in what form it can be most truthfully presented to those contemporaries who cannot see him for themselves.

The description and appreciation of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg by the pen of the historian must be left to the coming years. Even to-day his character has suffered little distortion from the favour and hate of political parties. Nevertheless, the daily ebb and flow of politics, the waves of the changing times, are still too apt to disturb the view of the contemporary observer.

It seems difficult to secure with brush or etching needle a final, firm, and lasting picture of the man who now enjoys the evening of his days. Everything in his appearance and nature cries for plastic treatment. There is nothing picturesque here, but there is significant form.

If we look round for a material in which we should like to see Hindenburg's features reproduced, then it will not be marble, in which Greece has perpetuated her great men for us, and Rome her Cæsars. Thoughts chase and passions rage beneath the fine

skin of the stone. We must not think of Italian bronzes, which leave unsolved the riddle of problematic natures. We will look nearer home, and seek on our own soil the stuff in which to shape the image of this German. In our ancient cathedrals, among the treasures of our museums, we find the wonderful wood-carvings of the Middle Ages. Boldly chiselled, yet soft in form, with the anatomy defined and clear, with all the surfaces toned down, and the soul glowing from within—not rigid but at rest. They are mostly kings and saints, whom no living eye has examined for resemblance, but who were men nevertheless, and have become more. They have become symbols.

It is far from my thoughts to-day to make an image of this man who, a vigorous and living force, stands among us unbowed by eighty years, or to raise him to the rank of saint.

Yet, if we contemplate Hindenburg's personality to-day, it appears more urgent and more appropriate rather to consider his importance in the life of our people than to inquire into the details of his character and praise his deeds. Thus we call him a symbol of our time, a symbol of devotion to service, to duty, to the state. He has grown out of the old Prussia, in which the roots of his strength lay and still lie, into the new Empire of the present day. His nature has not changed, nor did it need to change. The problems had changed, indeed, but not the standpoint from which Hindenburg proceeded to their solution.

Compared with the imperative of duty, reality becomes mere outward form.

Eighty years only acquire their real significance when age is as youth. They deprive a man of much, but one thing they give him : they raise him from the level and place him on a high mountain, not as on a pedestal for adoration, but as on a commanding eminence. From the heights of age and experience the world seems different than from the floor of the daily arena. Differences in men and things decrease or vanish. He who has so often watched the great grow small, has seen so much collapse and so much put forth new growth, who has passed through victory and defeat, views the events of the day with a serene judgment. He who saw so many men does not too critically distinguish one from another. Thus it is that age gives to Hindenburg's character its final maturity, serenity, confidence, and so he becomes for us a symbol of the permanent amid the change of time.

AN OLD SWEDISH FLAG

(Address to the Swedish officers who fought in the German Army in the Great War and placed a Swedish flag in the Berlin Arsenal as a memorial.)

MY DEAR SWEDISH COMRADES,

We are surrounded by tokens of the proud and glorious record of the German Army. To-day I welcome and salute Sweden's ancient banner in these halls. It is in its right place ; it is among comrades. As your honoured representative has said : "They heard the call : Brothers in distress ! "

A nation in distress ! That cry was heard in the ends of the earth when Germany entered upon the struggle for existence against a world of foes. There was no echoing answer, only from Sweden came the voice of friendship, of comradeship, the voice of the heart. . . . But to-day, gentlemen, you are living witnesses that more than a voice came to us. You came yourselves, to preserve and to renew the old blood brotherhood and comradeship in arms. You fought loyally with us until the end came with honour.

In the name of the old army in the ranks of which you fought and also in the name of the new German army which now receives you as dear and welcome

comrades, I thank you. I thank you and all who came and all who wished to come, all whose hearts were with us, all whose feelings to-day find expression in the consecration of this flag.

Whenever a German stands before it, let him say :
“ I salute thee, I thank thee. Loyalty for loyalty ! ”

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

(Speech delivered in the Ministry of Defence on October 5th, 1923, in memory of the fallen.)

WE assemble in this solemn hour to do honour to our dead. Our homage cannot be too simple nor too intimate. It is no festival that we celebrate. We do not celebrate defeat with loud music and waving flags and reverberating oratory. The dead no longer need to be honoured. Their honour lies in the fulfilment of their duty. For us who survive there arises the momentous question : Have they died in vain ? Is that to perish now which their bodies guarded in the moment of death—the Empire ? If so, it is bitter irony that we to-day erect memorial tablets whereon are inscribed the names of men of every German stock, men who devoted their lives to the common cause and whom death has united for ever. Do Germany's power, honour, and unity belong to the past alone then ? And do we survivors stand by while the Empire passes impotent, dishonoured, and disunited to the grave ? The dead speak to us from these tablets and demand that this house at least, whose porch they hallow, shall remain a place where men can work for the Empire with steadfast minds and zealous hearts and, if need be, die for it !

PROBLEMS

STATESMAN AND SOLDIER

CROMWELL, Frederick, Napoleon. When Fate unites statesman and soldier in one person, it is unnecessary to discuss the relation of the one to the other. As this happy union has been rare in the past and will be rare in the future, and as the relations of these two forces have been of decisive importance in the crisis of a nation's fate and will be so again, it is worth while to obtain a clear view of the closely associated spheres of their activity.

Let us first define the concepts. I use the word "statesman" in this discussion to mean the political head of a state, be it an absolute or constitutionally limited monarch, a dictator, a president, or a more or less anonymous government, or cabinet. The essential point is that all the threads of political life are conducted to and from this centre, and that, to attain its ends, it controls all the departments of state, such as finance, foreign affairs—and defence. When I use the word "soldier," I mean the expert organizer, trainer, and leader of the army in peace and war.

Let us turn first of all to the conditions that obtain in time of peace. The statesman must ask himself what he wants and what he can do. The answer to the first question lies wholly in the political sphere and is his business alone. To answer the second

he will have to pay attention to military as well as to political considerations. The creation and maintenance of a military force is not a question for the consideration and decision of soldiers alone. No man did more for the development of the Prussian Army than the "statesman" Bismarck, because he used the army for his political aims. His co-operation with Roon may well be regarded as ideal. The larger questions of military organization are of a political nature, e.g. the choice between general compulsory service and a mercenary system. Where the first system obtains, the length of the period of service is usually a compromise between political and military claims. Finance has a decisive voice in the matter, so also has the Foreign Office, which may regard military preparations at home as advantageous or prejudicial to the aims it may be pursuing abroad. Competition in armament and limitation of armament are both political questions in spite of their military form. The soldier cannot be blamed if he makes large demands on behalf of the interests he has to represent. It is the business of the statesman to adapt these demands to general policy. If Germany's naval armament before the war was a reason for England's attitude, the responsibility does not rest with the Naval Department, but with those who were responsible for the general direction of policy.

Nobody will expect a soldier to be an enthusiast in the cause of disarmament, but he will come to terms and adapt himself if policy requires him to do

so and if the statesman compels him. Differences of opinion between Foreign Office and Army have frequently occurred, and have not been confined to Germany. It is the task of the statesman to reconcile them. The nature of their respective duties demands of both departments a close, constant, and frank co-operation. As long as there is no guarantee of permanent peace, foreign policy must take account in its calculations of the strength of home military forces and of those of other countries. The prestige of a state in the world still depends largely on its military capacity. No matter how pacific the political aims of a state may be, it must nevertheless be assumed that it cannot be anything but gratifying for its head when he can look, in the last resort, to a strong army for the execution of his plans. It will depend partly on the strength of the army how far he may go in his demands and to what extent he must give way. The statesman asks the soldier : "What can *you* do ? What can *they* do ?" And the soldier asks in his turn : "What do *you* want ? What do *they* want ?" As a result of this exchange of views the statesman discovers what value he may attach to the military pawn in his game, and the soldier receives a hint as to the direction in which his preparations require completion.

The soldier's prime task is to secure his country against attack, and to effect this he must seek assistance from the most diverse civil departments. Finance, transport, industry, commerce, agriculture are in-

volved in the task, not forgetting the Foreign Office. It is the duty of the head of the state to secure this co-operation. The question of a country's security is first and foremost a political question. The first business of the Foreign Office is to prevent any menace from becoming a reality, to anticipate such by arbitration, and to gain allies in the event of an actual attack. Should war then really ensue, diplomacy must have done its utmost to provide that military operations may be conducted under the most favourable conditions possible. The soldier has learned which frontier he must regard, for the time being, as the most threatened, on what side he may count on trustworthy neighbours, and on whose support he may rely in the event of war. He will be informed, should menacing clouds appear on the political horizon, and he can decide for himself whether to accelerate and reinforce his measures for security or not. The preparation of plans for the eventuality of war is the soldier's business, but he requires the basic political guidance of the statesman. It is vital to the efficacy of his measures that he should know whether it is permissible or desirable, from the political point of view, to anticipate a threatened attack or whether the general situation requires a purely defensive attitude. The soldier will expound the advantages and disadvantages of both methods of action, and the statesman will decide whether political and military interests are identical or, should they diverge, which is to be regarded as vital. Even the statesman

who pursues a policy which is pacific in itself and contemplates nothing save the defence of the home country, may take the military offensive in a war forced upon him by others, should this strategy promise a surer and quicker attainment of the goal. It is for the statesman, not for the soldier, to decide whether the possibly superior prospects of a military offensive are not outweighed by political disadvantages, whether it is expedient and permissible to anticipate the enemy's declaration of war instead of waiting for it.

Graf Schlieffen's plan for a war on two fronts provided for the invasion of Belgium. This plan was known to the Government. Once the Government accepted the plan and the contingent necessity for widespread preparations during peace, it accepted the responsibility for all the political consequences which might arise therefrom. There can be no doubt that Schlieffen's plan, carried out in the spirit of its creator, offered a greater probability than any other of ending the war successfully and, above all, rapidly. This very prospect of a speedy termination of the war could not fail to make the plan *per se* congenial to everybody. It was the soldier's task and duty to explain to the statesman clearly and emphatically the military advantages of its intention. It was not the soldier's business to form an opinion of its political consequences and dangers. Let us suppose that the Government, while fully appreciating the *military* advantages of the Schlieffen plan—and

consequently its ultimate *political* advantages—had nevertheless pronounced against it, then it would have been the soldier's duty to have indicated the diminished prospect of a rapid and successful solution of the problem, and to have prepared another plan. Schlieffen, who taught us, "Not *one* method, *one* means, *one* expedient, but *many*," would have been equal to the change in the situation. It is useless to speculate whether he would have decided, as some English military writers now think we ought to have decided, to throw his full strength against Russia first and foremost while merely defending our western frontier. Russia's capacity for defence and room for retirement are great, and the experiences of 1812 were forbidding. The Government would have had no prospect whatever of a rapid conclusion of the war, and would certainly have been faced with a defensive war in its own western provinces. Frederick the Great certainly declares that provinces may be temporarily sacrificed to secure decisive military advantage, but the decision to make such sacrifices is always difficult for politician and soldier alike. It did not matter what decision was taken ; there was always some way out of the difficulty, even though the Belgian gate remained closed. My only concern now is to fix the responsibility for the fateful war plan of 1914—not as criticism after the event, but in exemplification of the principles which must underlie the co-operation of the political and military heads. The soldier was responsible for the plan itself, for

the hopes to be built on it, for its practicability and its prospects of military success. The statesman was responsible for the political consequences of its execution, and thus for its suitability for inclusion in the general political scheme. The soldier alone is to blame for the fact that the plan was not carried out as its creator intended, and failed to bring military success.

The necessity for the co-operation of statesman and soldier, and especially of the Foreign Office and the War Department, in the preparations for a possible war is thus established. The closer and franker this exchange of views the better it will be for all, but nobody should regard either diplomacy or soldiering as a secret science, the principles of which are revealed to the adept alone. Perhaps we suffered from the lack of such co-operation before the war ; if so, the fault was probably on both sides.

Let us now turn to co-operation in time of war. First of all, the soldier does not care whether the statesman who bears the responsibility for the outbreak of war, even though war has been forced upon him, is fighting simply in defence of his own interests or to attain a definite end. The soldier has one task only and that is to destroy the enemy's forces as quickly and as completely as possible, and thereby force him to renounce his political aims and make peace. In the execution of this task the soldier is absolutely independent. The nature of the task is best indicated by reference to the principle which

it was once the fashion to term "commission tactics." In the early stages of the Great War this principle was perhaps too widely interpreted, later on, unfortunately, it was too much forgotten, yet its soundness remains. We understood by the term the indication of the *end* to be attained together with the assignment of the *means*, without any direction as to the *execution* of the task—in contradistinction to the principle of issuing binding instructions as to the details of execution. The "commission" principle embodied the sound idea that the man who is responsible for success must choose the way to attain it. Just as it is a sign of a small mind to evade responsibility, so it is presumption in a man to grasp a responsibility in excess of his powers.

Should the soldier gain the victory which decides the war, he thereby provides the political head, the statesman, with a most welcome basis for a series of new decisions. This simple proposition is, of course, rarely exemplified in actual warfare. A sequence like Königgrätz and Nikolsburg, perhaps the most perfect example of the ideal exchange of rôle between statesman and soldier, is rare. As a rule, the campaign is complicated by the emergence of problems in which political interests interfere with purely military interests. There are no specifics for the reconciliation of these interests ; nothing can avail save tact on all sides and a recognition of identity of aim—or the arbitrary decision of the statesman. The goal of war is its end. All the factors involved

are concerned to reach this end by the use of every means, military and political. The soldier knows no other aim of war than this : the military destruction of the enemy. The statesman may have had his own definite aims at the outbreak of war, and these aims may change, contract or expand during the war and after its conclusion. He will constantly receive the opinion of the soldier on the military situation, its prospects and possibilities, and his diplomatic adviser will likewise report to him concerning the effect of the course of the war on other states, while the internal departments will keep him posted as to the country's capacity. Weighing all these items of information the statesman will ask himself day by day whether the end of the war is drawing near, whether he has already attained his object or whether its attainment is within reach, whether this object is worth further sacrifices, or whether the enemy is at last ready to make peace. Should the statesman, after consideration of all these points, decide to continue the struggle, the soldier will then continue to discharge his commission with the original object in view.

Difficulties increase when the area of war increases, when war has to be waged on several fronts and against different opponents. The prime responsibility for deciding against which enemy his forces must be launched to secure a decisive issue falls to the soldier, but even this decision involves political consideration of the possible and probable consequences of a victory

over one adversary or the other. The massing of troops at one point involves weakness at another, and attention may have to be paid to political considerations should there be any possibility of a reverse at the weak point or should it be necessary to sacrifice home territory. The difficulties are doubled when the war has to be waged with allies. Just as the prosecution of a pre-war policy of alliance is the statesman's business and includes therefore the making of alliances and military agreements, similarly the co-operation of the allies in war is constantly dependent on political support. Although efforts may be made to secure unity of supreme military command—and this is indeed, according to the experience of the war, a necessary condition of success—the complete absorption of the political forces of one state in those of the other is hardly to be expected. There will always be separate interests, the appreciation of which is not the business of the soldier alone. Every state will desire to see its frontiers as well secured as possible, and it is only by the joint deliberation of statesman and soldier that it can be successfully determined what concession *can* be made on military grounds, and what concession *must* be made on political grounds. The sacrifice of an ally may appear desirable from the military point of view, but inadmissible from the political point of view. It is precisely in a war that is waged jointly with allies that the dissension between the military and political departments or even a mere lack of co-

ordination in their activity must produce the most disastrous consequences.

Let us suppose now that the war is approaching its end. The first suggestion of peace may proceed from the soldier. If he has been successful he may regard his victory as so decisive that he considers the enemy's power of resistance broken. Likewise he may regard his own defeat as so decisive that further resistance seems to offer no prospect of success. Finally, he may foresee a gradual weakening of the enemy's forces, but also of his own, a contingency of which he must in duty bound inform the statesman without delay. It is now the latter's turn to take decisions and to assume responsibilities. In the case of a victory he will try to establish by the most careful inquiry whether the success achieved has really made the enemy ready for peace, and therefore ready to accept the peace contemplated by the statesman. It is his business alone to decide whether his demands are politically capable of fulfilment or whether their magnitude must lead to a prolongation of the war. The soldier, after his victory, will be in a position to continue the war, but the reproach of having prolonged it cannot touch him. When defeat has to be admitted the statesman must face the question whether he ought to try to make peace as quickly as possible—a peace obtainable, of course, only on unfavourable terms—or whether, in spite of the soldier's declaration, he should regard the continuation of the war as a lesser evil than the conclusion of an unfavourable

peace. He may be more optimistic than the soldier and still believe in the possibility of a successful national effort, or perhaps he may be counting on helpful intervention from outside. If the statesman takes upon himself the responsibility for the prolongation of the war, the soldier has no other duty than to continue it to the best of his ability, without hope of military success. The statesman is in the same position when a victorious enemy declines to enter into negotiations for peace.

The most difficult case of all for decision is when the exhaustion of one side or the other is anticipated. The soldier's responsibility is grave when he has to give an authoritative opinion on an uncertain future ; but it would be wrong for him to hesitate over the painful confession of his own approaching exhaustion if he thereby makes it possible for the statesman to clear the way for peace while there is yet time, before a catastrophe perhaps necessitates much more unfavourable terms. In this case the decision is no easier for the statesman than for the soldier, because he, too, is reckoning with unknown factors. The move for peace may also come from other quarters : an offer may be received from the enemy ; powers not involved may intervene or threaten active interference ; the statesman may regard his war aim as fulfilled or the enemy as ready to negotiate. The possibility of peace thus arises in the political sphere. Should the statesman decide on such grounds to enter into negotiations for peace, military considerations

must recede into the background. It may be hard for the soldier, in view of the previous favourable development of his operations, to relinquish the promising prospect of exploiting his success to the full, but he must acquiesce in the political decision of the statesman. The latter bears the responsibility for the correct choice of the moment for making peace. Both, statesman and soldier, have waged war to secure peace.

The treaty of peace is the statesman's business, even though the trend of his negotiations is determined by military success or failure. The soldier, consulted before the actual conclusion of negotiations, can suggest military *desiderata* if such are admissible and can press them if their fulfilment would add to the country's security and thus provide an additional guarantee of peace. With this object in view he may desire, in the case of a successful war, modifications of frontier. It is not his business to make further demands. It is the statesman's business to win the peace: the soldier has glory enough if he has won the war.

THE ATTAINABLE OBJECT

SPECULATION as to the probability of “permanent peace” leads nowhere. The sceptic points to many thousand years of military history, and doubts that the epilogue was written at Versailles ; the idealist, on the other hand, asks why he should despair of this new dawn. The one sees the eternal ups and downs of life, the other the ascent of humanity to purer heights. There is no proof of the justice of either view, and prophecy is an ungrateful occupation. No Locarno will avail against convulsions that shake the world, and an onslaught from the East will have to be stayed, as once before at Liegnitz, by the sword of Western chivalry. But such reflexions are out of place in this rude present. The question must be thus framed : “ Is it worth while to strive, in the political sphere, to limit the risk of decision by force of arms ? ” To answer the question in the affirmative is sufficient to imply an adequate political idealism and a recognition of the fact that progress is imaginable in gradual stages only.

Taking this road, which begins at the finger-post, “ To Permanent Peace. Distance Unknown,” we must be content to reach by nightfall the little village whose inn bears the sign “ Limitation of Armaments.” We shall not remove war from the world altogether,

but it should only be waged to reconcile "the great antitheses of life." The statement that war is a continuation of policy by other means has become a catch-phrase and is therefore dangerous. We can say with equal truth : War is the bankruptcy of policy.

It is incorrect to attribute the present peace movement to the technical horrors and the rapid extension of war. There is nothing humane about the sword or the 21 cc. high explosive shell. We need only remember the Thirty Years War and the many spots on the map, now marked "Waste," which were once the sites of flourishing villages, to realize that in the past, too, war spared neither wife nor child, house nor home. After all, it is doubtful whether the blessings of our much-boasted culture are more valuable than those which were destroyed long ago by the Germanic torch and sword. Fear of a gas attack on our towns, therefore, must not be allowed to influence our judgment, for fear was ever a bad counsellor and anxiety is no philosophy of the universe. The same technical science which produces weapons of attack has always created the appropriate weapons of defence.

Let us look at the matter from a different angle and set ourselves a goal that appears to lie within the limits of the attainable. Although we recognize the hopelessness of the demand for the abolition of war when the magnitude of the issues is such as must inevitably agitate the whole world, we may

insist all the more that recourse shall not be had to the sword in purely political questions. Perhaps—and there is much scepticism in the word—*perhaps* it is possible to attain in Europe a condition which will guarantee time and scope for quiet thought and earnest exhortation before one party flies at the other's throat. It is better to confine our observations to Europe, for Eastern Asia and Central Africa do not appear altogether accessible at present to propaganda for peace in the future, and America is a land by itself. Europe alone offers ample scope for the processes of politics.

If we attempt to consider the possibilities of peace from the military point of view, we shall find that here also the historical method alone can serve us. There are, at bottom, two kinds of war. In the first, one nation sets out to devour another nation which is better and more comfortably situated. The history of the world offers examples enough of this kind, and its registers are perhaps provided with a few black or yellow pages for future entries. To this category belong also wars which have been born of great intellectual movements, and the Thirty Years War, a civil war waged with the assistance of obliging neighbours, remains a warning example. With these great military catastrophes may be contrasted the wars we generally call "cabinet wars." There are many varieties of war intermediate between these two, and it will be difficult to assign any particular war to the first or the second category with certainty.

Reducing both to a formula, we may say that the first comprises wars between *nations*, the second wars between *armies*. The Great War occupied a middle place : its causes were political, its dimensions national.

If we declare our inability to secure ourselves effectively against momentous and arbitrary decisions which convulse the world, there remains nevertheless a chance, even in the military sphere, of reducing the probability of war.

The risk of war lies essentially in the inequality of military forces, which leads the stronger power to secure its political interest by the threat or the exercise of violence against the weaker. A guarantee of peace therefore lies less in the reduction of armaments than in the observance of agreed proportions. An effort towards this end must not be too ambitious. The real, effective military force of a country lies in the size of its population and in its wealth, and these forces are not susceptible of limitation. It is, however, feasible to bring the available peace strength of one army into such a relation with the peace strength of another that no state has a force at its disposal which is superior to the combined forces of several other states. Such an adjustment would enhance the general feeling of security, just as the increase of security by treaty favours in turn the reduction of armaments.

It is necessary to distinguish between offensive and defensive armament. Any attempt to take from a state all possibility of self-defence or to restrict that

possibility increases the feeling of insecurity in that state and thereby increases the risk of war.

A defenceless neighbour is the strongest inducement to war ; reciprocal adjustment of armaments, therefore, seems to be the first attainable stage on the road to permanent peace.

MODERN ARMIES

THE following observations represent my own personal opinion only and must not be regarded as deriving authority from my official experience. They are the product of my imagination and bear as little relation to the organization of the German Reichswehr as they do to the restrictions imposed on us by the Treaty of Versailles. Lastly, they refer to land forces only and leave naval matters to more expert examination.

If I am to outline my theme more precisely I should like to put the following questions and endeavour to answer them as far as the scope of my observations will permit. In what direction is military evolution tending? Are armies still necessary? What will they look like? How will they act?

These theoretical questions spring of course from very solid facts, and if I now propose to discuss them it is with a full consciousness of the precarious nature of prophecy.

In order to find a fixed point of departure we must first take a glance back at the armies which marched to the Great War; and we shall make the astonishing discovery that all were more or less inadequately prepared. The comparison is simplified by the fact that all the great Continental powers had established

their military systems on the basis of general compulsory service and all shared the endeavour to line their frontiers as rapidly and in as great force as possible. We need not insist here on the magnificent achievement of German organization. Let us, however, indicate three great mistakes. In spite of the general conviction that a war would bring Germany face to face with the struggle for existence, and in spite of the fact that we counted with certainty, in military circles at least, with a war on two fronts, that is to say we counted on a numerical superiority of the enemy, our own man power was not, for reasons which need not concern us here, fully exploited in the military sense and the principle of general military service was not rigorously applied. The provision for the maintenance of the struggle, i.e. for the replacement both of men and supplies, was inadequate and the economic mobilization for the same purpose was likewise inadequate. We owe it to the far-seeing eye of Walter Rathenau and the prudence of Falkenhayn as Minister of War, that after the outbreak of war at least the necessary steps were taken to safeguard our economic position. Everything had been adjusted to that sudden, powerful first stroke, although Schlieffen himself had hinted at the possibility of another Seven Years War.

France had fully exploited her man power and that of her colonies as well. Her material armament, on the other hand, was inadequate, particularly after the industrial north and east had been put out of action.

America's support was of the greatest value here, for without it France could hardly have satisfied her requirements, particularly in munitions.

Russia was unable to make full use of her population at the outset, but this disadvantage was set off by her consequent ability to replace casualties from an almost inexhaustible reservoir of men, and she succeeded in bringing up tolerably well-trained drafts promptly to the front. On the other hand, her material equipment was and remained absolutely inadequate. The ambassadors of the allied powers were constantly compelled to transmit Russian requests for arms and munitions to their governments, and even during the war the Russian munition industries never attained any capacity worth mentioning.

Of all the great powers, Austria-Hungary was probably the worst organized for war, both in personnel and in material. We need not mention the various reasons for this condition. The consequences showed themselves in the rapid decline of the army's striking capacity, which was excellent at first, and in her growing dependence on Germany in the economic sphere.

England's organization for peace and war was quite different from that of any of the Continental powers. Although there was a feeling, in military circles at least, that participation in a great war might be unavoidable, nobody was prepared for a complete exploitation of the country's military capacity. The belief seems to have prevailed that the navy and the

seven excellent divisions which were immediately available for active service would suffice, and that the country's industrial organization, efficient in itself, would be able to produce the necessary supplies. To Lord Kitchener belongs the credit of having recognized in good time that efforts on quite a different scale would be required to secure a final victory, and of having initiated the necessary measures. England's organizing achievements during the war were admirable. As the new formations required time for establishment, industry was able to adapt itself to the requirements of war, and America made good the deficiencies.

The position of the United States with regard to military organization was unique. The relatively small army, along with the navy, sufficed for current needs, and her geographical situation enabled America to choose her own time for entry into the Great War. When she did decide to engage in it immense organizing activity ensued which enabled her to raise an absolutely new modern army from her inexhaustible reservoir of men and supplies, and the sources of its strength were by no means depleted at the end of the war.

The conditions in the other countries involved were in general similar, although there were differences in detail.

To what military success did this universal levy in mass, this gigantic parade of armies lead? In spite of every effort the war did not end with the decisive

destruction of the enemy on the field of battle ; for the most part it resolved itself into a series of exhausting struggles for position until, in the face of an immense superiority of force, the springs which fed the resistance of one of the combatants, the sources of its personnel, its material, and finally of its morale dried up, although they were not exhausted. Has the victor really rejoiced in his victory ? Do the results of the war bear any just relation to the sacrifice of national strength ? Is it necessary for whole nations to hurl themselves upon one another whenever recourse to arms is unavoidable ? The soldier must ask himself whether these giant armies can even be manœuvred in accordance with a strategy that seeks a decision, and whether it is possible for any future war between these masses to end otherwise than in indecisive rigidity.

Perhaps the principle of the levy in mass, of the nation in arms, has outlived its usefulness, perhaps the *fureur du nombre* has worked itself out. Mass becomes immobile ; it cannot manœuvre and therefore cannot win victories, it can only crush by sheer weight.

Let us first examine the conclusions which the great powers have drawn from their experience of the war with a view to military organization, omitting of course those states whose military affairs were regulated by the terms of peace. America and England have reverted in general to their pre-war systems, i.e. to the principle of maintaining small armies ready for

immediate employment. The only new features are that America has substantially improved the mobilization of her economic resources and is extending her system of military training for the young, and England has created a powerful air force. France is in process of revising her army organization on two principles : firstly, she is creating and maintaining a peace time army which is approximately at war strength and would therefore be fully ready for employment in a very short time ; and secondly, she is exploiting general compulsory service to the utmost, thus creating strong reserves. The period of service has been greatly reduced, which facilitates the training of all fit men without producing too high a peace strength, while the value of the immediately available peace time force is to be raised by the inclusion of a larger proportion of men who are willing to serve for a longer period. The most thorough preparations have been made for economic mobilization, for the military training of the young, and for the employment of coloured troops. It is important to note that France has a strong air force ready to start at any moment. Italy seems to be counting on the employment of the Fascist militia in support of her professional army, and is showing extraordinary energy in the encouragement of military "fascism" among the young.

Russia, although still hampered by many obstacles, is making distinct progress in the creation of a peace time army available for immediate action and proportioned to her need of security, and is striving

incidentally to obtain military control of the mass of her physically fit men through a militia system. In the newly-organized armies of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Jugoslavia we find as a rule the pre-war system of general military service with a minimum period of service with the colours, coupled with the maintenance of a peace strength necessary for security.

Thus there appears to be little evidence of change in the practical application of the experience gained in the war compared with the principles of the pre-war period. Nevertheless, new points of view are beginning to declare themselves. The general economic situation compels all states to pay attention to the limitation of expenditure on armament and consequently to reduce its most expensive form, viz., high peace strength with a long period of service and lavish equipment, and incidentally to limit as far as possible the unproductive retention of male labour in military service.

On the other hand, there exists, in the present state of world politics, a necessity for protection by an effective regular army against any possible hostile attack, coupled with the desire common to all free nations to make all necessary preparations for defence in the event of a struggle for national existence. If we accept the general desire for peace evinced in the disarmament negotiations as sincere, then there is in the existing military organizations no irreconcilable antithesis, as long as it is clearly borne in mind that strong, i.e. overstrong peace time forces, ready to

strike at any moment or capable of being brought up to full fighting strength in a short time, constitute a very easy, tempting, and therefore dangerous menace to peace, whereas the most extensive preparations for a *national* war partake far more of a defensive character —to an extent determined by the measure in which a state is threatened or feels itself threatened by its neighbour. This sense of intimidation cannot be represented in disarmament calculations in terms of figures. The only tangible figures available for calculation on either side are those of the armies in being. Indeed, in any agreement as to military strength the greater guarantee of peace lies, as it were, in the effort to secure a theoretical, if unattainable, diminution of strength. I content myself with this cursory view of the disarmament problem in this connection.

The conflict of "man" and "material" is included in the concept "war." The shield was invented to meet the sword, the concrete dug-out to thwart the explosive shell, the mask to keep out gas, and so the struggle will continue as long as there are wars, the weapon of attack gaining the upper hand until the appropriate weapon of defence has been shaped to meet it. Technical science is busy on both sides. It is therefore quite false to speak of the victory of material over man. Material has prevailed over human masses but not over *man* and never will, because it only becomes animate in the hand of man.

The mistake lies in opposing an immobile and almost defenceless human mass to the brutal action of material. The more we increase the mass of combatants, the more certain is the triumph of material, for its capacity is far wider than that of the richest reservoir of men. The only possibility lies in the struggle of the human mind against lifeless material. The greater the advance of technical science, the more effectively can it devote its inventions and instruments to the service of the army and the higher will be the demands it makes on the soldier who manipulates these technical aids. Anyone who has the smallest idea what technical knowledge, what numerous instruments, operated only by carefully trained experts, what highly disciplined mental faculties are necessary for the effective control of modern artillery fire, must admit that these essential qualities cannot be taken for granted with men whose training has been brief and superficial, and that such men, pitted against a small number of practised technicians on the other side, are "cannon fodder" in the worst sense of the term. But suppose these untried soldiers are not there at all? Suppose there is no living target for this scientifically directed material? Destruction of the enemy's army, not destruction of the country, remains the supreme law of war, although at times it seems otherwise. Material is superior to the living, mortal human mass, but it is not superior to the living and immortal human mind.

When we speak of the technical side of modern

warfare, we think first of all of the aerial arm. During the war—and still more since—this branch assumed a position of equality with the land and sea forces, without changing the fundamental laws of war. We must admit that an entirely new battle-field with its own new conditions has been created for the soldier, and incidentally for the soldier's technical associate. False conclusions as to the future necessity of land armies have been drawn from the possibility of air attacks on the centres of national resistance and thus on the sources of military strength which, though still the same as before, have become much more vulnerable to-day. The only difference is that whereas fighting has hitherto been limited to land and water a decision can now be obtained in the air as well. The belief is widely held that war will now pass over the soldier's head to descend solely upon the civilian in office and workshop. There would be nothing new in such attacks on the "hinterland," that is, on the civilian. Disregarding the older examples of wars which have destroyed civilizations, we need only think of the Thirty Years War, the Turkish invasions, and Heidelberg. It would be frivolous to deny or to extenuate the dangers and horrors of an attack by air on the "hinterland," especially when coupled with the use of gas. Attack by air extends the old risks and the old possibilities to a new battle-field. The task of active resistance falls to the air force, which attempts, as the best remedy, to carry the attack back to the enemy's country or at least to destroy the attacker.

This new danger creates the demand for the provision of passive security for the country's vital centres which will perhaps prove both expensive and inconvenient. It is difficult to understand why nothing, absolutely nothing, has been done to provide this passive protection here in Germany, where active defence in the air has been denied to us, and it is still more difficult to shoulder the responsibility for this omission.

Let us now, after this brief inquiry into the present state of armaments, endeavour to visualize the course of a future war, without losing sight of the fact that notions and measures which find general acceptance at present have so far undergone little adaptation to future development and that the next war may take quite a different course from the one which we may here describe as in accordance with the facts from the military point of view.

The war will begin with an air attack on both sides, because the air forces are the most immediately available for action against the enemy. It is not the chief towns and supply centres which will form the immediate object of attack but the opposing air forces, and only after the defeat of the latter will the attack be directed against other objects. If the forces of both sides are approximately equal there will be no rapid, decisive issue, even though one side may be forced to the defensive and thus compelled to abandon its own attack. It will depend on the passive resistance, i.e. on the morale of the party attacked, to what

extent the material and moral advantage of the superior invader will affect the defending side's sources of strength. In passing, we must lay emphasis on the fact that all great concentrations of troops provide easy and important targets. The disturbance of the mobilization of men and supplies is one of the chief objects of attack by air.

The attack initiated by the air force will be pressed with all possible speed by all available troops, i.e. in essence, by the regular army. The more efficient this army, the greater its mobility, the more resolute and competent its command, the greater will be its chance of beating the opposing forces rapidly out of the field, of hindering the enemy in the creation and training of further forces and perhaps of making him immediately ready for peace. While the two professional armies are fighting for the initial decision, the creation of defensive forces is in progress behind them. The army that has been victorious in the first act of war will, while drawing on its own reserves of men and material for the necessary maintenance of its striking power, essay to prevent the newly-formed masses on the other side, superior in numbers but inferior in quality, from developing their strength and above all from forming compact and well equipped fronts. In a few words then, the whole future of warfare appears to me to lie in the employment of mobile armies, relatively small but of high quality and rendered distinctly more effective by the addition of aircraft, and in the simultaneous mobilization of

the whole defence force, be it to feed the attack or for home defence.

The necessity for these modern armies is for the present incontestable. I have described their functions in the preceding pages. How will they present themselves to the eye?

The peace time or regular army, which may also be described as the "covering army" or the "operating army," consists of professional, long-term soldiers, volunteers as far as possible. The period of service varies, depending on the manner of employment. Good technical training naturally demands longer service, whereas in other departments as much young blood as possible is desirable. The size of this army will depend on the material resources of the state, on its strategical position, and on its area, and must at least afford security against hostile attack.

It will be objected that all this involves competitive armament, but apart from the fact that the size of this very expensive regular army is limited by the financial capacity of the state, this size provides the best basis of international agreement and thus suggests limitation or equalization of armaments. It is obvious that every state will raise its regular army to the highest possible pitch of perfection in the training of officers and men and in armament and equipment. It must satisfy three main demands : high Mobility, to be attained by the employment of numerous and highly efficient cavalry, by the fullest possible use of motor transport, and by the marching capacity of the

infantry ; the most effective Armament ; and continuous Replacement of men and material. It is best when this "operating army" requires no reinforcement at all for its first move, i.e. when no special mobilization is necessary. In any case, it should require very little.

Side by side with this regular army and in the closest union with it there is a permanent *cadre* of officers, non-commissioned officers and men, through whose training units and schools pass all the fit young men in the country. There is a short initial period of training followed by the necessary repetition courses. In this way a military mass is constituted which, though unsuited to take part in a war of movement and seek a decision in formal battle, is well able, after a hurried completion of training and the supply of suitable equipment, to discharge the duty of home defence and at the same time to provide from its best elements a continuous reinforcement of the regular, combatant army in the field. In order to make the short period of training tolerable, it should be preceded by a training of the young, laying less emphasis on the military side than on a general physical and mental discipline. This preliminary training can only be made effective under the compulsion of the state. It would lead me too far to discuss the details of this organization, e.g. the enrolment and training of officers. I will content myself with a glance at the question of armament, which stands in the closest possible relation to the indispensable organization of industry for war.

In discussing this question we must start from the hypothesis that an army hardly ever or only for a brief period possesses the weapon it desires and which, for the time being, is the best ; for so rapid is the advance of technical science that every weapon becomes obsolete at the very moment of its distribution to the troops. The equipment of a large army with a new type of weapon is so enormously costly that no state undertakes the task unless compelled.

The smaller the army, the easier it will be to equip it with modern weapons, whereas the provision of a constant supply for armies of millions is an impossibility.

The demand that the regular army shall be ready for action at any moment and shall at the same time be equipped with first-class weapons, has the inevitable consequence that a full supply of the highest possible quality must be kept in hand, and that the necessary replacements and sources of supply must be maintained. The cost of this requirement is in itself sufficient to limit the strength of the regular army. It is not enough that this army, whatever its accepted strength, should be in possession of the necessary armament and equipment. Supplies for the first replacement must be ready, and they must be sufficient to last until manufacture is resumed in the factories which exist for that purpose. This requirement is perfectly natural in itself, and would contain nothing new if we were not dealing with a relatively small regular army in place of a levy in mass. The arming

of masses must be placed on a totally new basis. It becomes impossible to stock modern equipment for armies of millions when it is urged, and with justification, that these masses, in view of their inferior military training, are most particularly in need of the support of material. The accumulation of great reserve stocks is the most uneconomical process imaginable. It is also of doubtful military value owing to the natural obsolescence of material. Imagine, for example, the accumulation in depots of thousands of aeroplanes, which often become worthless in a single year owing to the introduction of new types.

There is only one way to equip masses with weapons, and that is by fixing the type and at the same time arranging for mass production in case of need. The army is able, in co-operation with technical science, to establish the best type of weapon for the time being by constant study in testing shops and on practice grounds. An agreement must be made with industry to secure that this fixed type can be produced at once and in the necessary quantities. The intensive preparations necessary for this co-operation will hardly be possible without legislative sanction. They must be made with the closest collaboration of soldier and manufacturer and will include, firstly, the selection and acquisition of the necessary raw materials ; and secondly, the selection and equipment of factories for all items of armament and supply. Subsidies from public funds will be necessary, of course, even

in peace time, for the adaptation of factories to the requirements of war and for the provision of material and machines, but these subsidies will cost the state less than the accumulation and maintenance of large stocks of obsolescent equipment. If the military authorities make allowance for the inevitable conditions of rapid mass production by dispensing with articles of the very finest quality in favour of something as simple as possible, then the interval between the allotment of orders and the commencement of delivery can be diminished, although this interval should in any case be covered by the operations of the regular army in the field.

Many problems of a military and economic nature, of which I could only give the briefest indication here, present themselves when we think these questions out, and I am content if this excursion into the land of military imagination should encourage further study.

ARMY AND STATE

THE position of the army within the state and the relation of the people to the defence forces are matters which have always had an important bearing on public life and have sometimes determined its course. Their importance is the same to-day and may be greater to-morrow. If we were to consider these reciprocal relations historically we should find at least as many differences as there are states. Let us try to find the permanent element in these relations and satisfy ourselves as to the form they should take for the general good. In so doing I should like to raise the discussion above the everyday sphere and eschew all catchwords, even such popular phrases as "nation in arms," "mercenary system," "dissociation from politics," etc. I see no "blazing beacons"** whatsoever to-day. I can still detect the presence of heat in many heads, and I should like to try to dispel it, for this age of ours demands clear thinking, clear eyes, and clear aims. I recapitulate my theme in the two questions : What demand do I make *of* the army ? What demand do I make *for* the army ?

Let us first of all be clear as to the nature of the army. If we do not wish to entangle ourselves in

* "Frisch auf, mein Volk, die Flammenzeichen rauchen."—TH. KÖRNER.

long-winded historical observations, we can compress the evolution of armies; in all essential respects, into three periods, which of course differ widely in date with different nations according to the part they have played in history. The first period is that of the fighting nation, the second that of the professional army, and the third again that of the arming of the people or of general compulsory military service. The Greek nation fought at Salamis and Thermopylæ, but Alexander's campaigns already reveal the beginning of the national professional army. Rome's national levies subjugated Italy, but the lordship of the world was won by her professional soldiers. Nations in arms descended from the north upon the civilization of the Mediterranean, but the first German Cæsar of the new Roman Empire appeared in Rome at the head of a professional German army. For centuries nations in arms from the East hurled themselves upon the West, which was protected by its chivalry and its organized armies.

In times of war the citizen is constantly compelled to turn soldier. In Transylvania the peasant withdrew to his fortified church in the face of hostile attack; in Germany the honest artizan took sword and shield and manned the walls to guard the freedom of his city, his life and the lives of his family. Meanwhile, professional soldiering reached its zenith in the Italian *condottiere*, the German *Landsknecht*, and the ubiquitous Swiss mercenary. Even as late as the Thirty Years War the great names of Tilly,

Wallenstein and Bernhard of Weimar attracted a horde of willing professional soldiers who subsisted on war, but the national Swedish army had already made its appearance in Germany, and its almost inexplicable success, even after its great king's death, must be attributed not merely to its innate military efficiency but to the unity of its structure, for it was penetrated with the feeling of being "Swedish" and "Protestant."

The nations had by this time fought one another to a standstill, and their exhaustion naturally gave rise to the professional armies of the eighteenth century. These still contained many individuals, frequently the best, who, being soldiers by trade and inclination, "fought just as willingly under the double eagle as under the lion and the lilies";* but in substance these armies assumed a national character. Although France still maintained many foreign regiments, and England, while using her own levies, bought foreign troops for her more ambitious enterprises, armies like those of Russia and Prussia consisted almost exclusively of Russians and Prussians.

Into this world of professional armies there now entered an absolutely new element: the relation of the army to the sovereign. During this period the country was represented by the monarch; the state, at any rate in its external relations, was completely

* "Gleichgültig unterm Doppeladler fechtend,
Wie unterm Löwen und den Lilien."

—(SCHILLER, *Die Piccolomini*).

identified with its ruler. The consequence was the very natural attachment of the army to the person of the monarch. It is here that we must seek the origin of those natural personal relations between prince and army which have remained effective down to our own time. Thus England's most up-to-date artillery unit has continued, from the eighteenth century on, to call itself "The Royal Artillery Corps." The connexion between the War Lord and his soldiers dates from this time, not from the age which has suggested vague catchwords like "vassalage" and "feudal service"—an age when, in fact, the imperial "vassals" mostly sold their "service" at a very high price, all too often only to betray their Emperor while he tarried in the distant south. The predominance of the monarchical over the military idea is most obvious in the "Imperial" army of our day, the Austrian army, whose polyglot and multifarious units were held together down to our own time by the Emperor. In this age of disintegration and of petty principalities it was natural that the organic life of armies, like patriotism itself, should show a varied development, turning here to playing at soldiers, there to the beginning of a national defence force, national in the sense that the *people* began to take a lively interest in the *royal* army. It is characteristic of the position of the sovereign in the nation that Prussia rejoices over Leuthen, while Paris feels a malicious pleasure in the defeat of the Duc de Soubise at Rossbach.

The ideas of the French Revolution introduced an entirely new epoch in warfare. I say deliberately the *ideas*, not the measures, for it is to policy that we must assign the responsibility for the success of the French revolutionary armies, not to their own efficiency nor to the incapacity of the opposing forces. It was Napoleon who translated the ideas of the French Revolution into action, because he used a nation's whole strength to execute the decisions of a lofty will and to attain great ends. His opponents failed to understand this, and being without revolutionary ideas and measures of their own were simply not in a position to oppose him. Therein lies the explanation of Jena, Austerlitz, Moscow, until—yes, until Europe raised similar revolutionary forces against him ; for what, after all, was the rise of Prussia under Yorck, Stein, Arndt, Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, but a revolution, directed indeed “with prudent hand at the right time” ?* Russia preserved her Russianism in smouldering, irresistible wrath ; even Austria's cold diplomacy grew almost warm with the patriotic resolve of her many races, and Spanish national pride dealt the conqueror his first wound, the wound that never healed.

The battle of ideas had been fought out, and peace fell on Europe.

Among the French revolutionary notions which

* “Der Meister kann die Form zerbrechen,
Mit weiser Hand, zur rechten Zeit.”

—SCHILLER, *Das Lied von der Glocke*.

persisted was that of general compulsory military service. This notion found acceptance in different forms and in different measure throughout the whole of Europe, excluding England. It governed our endeavours throughout the Great War, and was powerful enough to claim first England, then America. It still prevails, and embraces to-day not merely the whole category of men fit to bear arms, but also all the resources of the nation that can be exploited in war.

That is the view in France, and to prevent the consequences of similar views in Germany, Versailles forbade us to resort to general compulsory service.

Let me briefly indicate that the soldier, who seeks a decision in mobility, rapidity and inspiration, has grave doubts whether armed masses can ever secure such a decision, and whether nations in arms can avoid finishing in trenches once more. This consideration is a digression from our theme, which was, to consider the soldier *per se* in his relation to the state, without attempting to inquire whether compulsory or voluntary service has made him what he is. In spite of this historical introduction—long but perhaps not superfluous—we have not yet quite defined the nature of the army ; for the army has a life of its own, it lives under conditions and restrictions peculiar to itself.

The solemn characteristic feature of the soldier's profession is the readiness to die in discharge of duty. Other professions, too, may require the risk of life

in discharge of duty, every man may be faced, outside his profession, with the necessity for the last great sacrifice, as an ethical duty ; but in no other profession do killing and its corollary, readiness to die, form the essence of professional duty. If the true art of war lies in destroying the enemy, then its exponent must also be prepared to be destroyed himself. This conception of the soldier's function justifies us in speaking of soldiering as something unique. It is the responsibility for life and death which gives the soldier his special character, his gravity, and self-consciousness—not only the responsibility for his own life, which may be sacrificed, not light-heartedly but from a feeling of duty, but the simultaneous responsibility for the lives of comrades and, in the end, for the life of the enemy, whose death is not an act of independent free will on the part of the killer, but an acknowledgment of professional duty. The feeling of responsibility for oneself and others is one of the most vital characteristics of the soldier's life. Responsibility towards oneself demands the most exacting inward and outward training for the military profession, so that the final sacrifice may not be made in vain. Responsibility for others leads us to the next and no less important demand made on the soldier.

The soldier's field of activity is man, who controls science, technics and material. The army is a combination of many men with the same serious aim. This gives the soldier's profession a quite peculiar bond of unity, a corporate sense which we call

comradeship. The term is extremely comprehensive. If we start out from the notion of responsibility we find that "comradeship" means "one for all," for each man bears, in his own way and in his own place, a share of the responsibility for the welfare, the ability, the achievements, and the life of others. For the senior, the leader, the superior, this means the duty of correcting, of training, and of supervising others ; for the junior, the novice, the subordinate, it means the duty of conscious, voluntary subordination. Love and confidence are the two great components of comradeship.

Commanding and obeying are the characteristics of the army, and the one is as hard as the other. Both are simplified in proportion as orders are given with prudence and intelligence and obedience is rendered with perception and confidence. Human nature demands compulsion when many are to be united for one purpose. Thus discipline becomes an inseparable feature of the army, and its nature and degree are the true measure of the army's efficiency. The more voluntary the nature of the discipline the better, but only a discipline that has become habit and matter of course can survive the test in the hour of danger. Self-respect and *esprit de corps* demand some form of outward expression. Hence the justification of the uniform as the mark of a special class. The uniform indicates the soldier's responsibility ; it is the outward sign of inward comradeship ; it supports and confirms discipline.

Having at length shaped our army to our liking, let us put it in its place in the state.

The special character of the army has been developed in the preceding pages, but we must supplement this description by insisting on the fact that the army is a part of the nation and must feel itself to be so. We cannot imagine armies to-day other than purely national armies, and all the qualities of a nation will be reflected in the army. The character of a national army is determined by the fact that it draws on all classes of the people. Therefore, in order to satisfy the theoretical demands we make on the army, we are entitled to claim for it a selection from the country's most efficient elements and, under a system of compulsory military service, we must require of every individual, during his period of service, an enhancement of his sense of responsibility and personal value. This is both profitable and necessary for the army, because the demands made in the military sphere are so varied that only a combination of elements from all classes can satisfy them. There is scope and occupation in the army for the highest mental as well as the highest physical efficiency. Whereas delight in the trade of arms, inherited and indulged from generation to generation, drives one man to the army, another may join from the desire to devote his ability and knowledge to the most immediate form of national service ; one is attracted by a profession which gives pride of place to manly strength and personal value, another by the prospect of activity

in the open, another because he is interested in the machinery of war, and yet another because he loves horses.

“Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐφέλκεται ἄνδρα σιδηρος”

Iron attracts man.

Such a combination of individuals, the consequent close association with all classes of the people, and the participation in the lives and destinies of all prevent the army from becoming a caste when it should be a profession.

The army should become a state within the state, but it should be merged in the state through service ; in fact, it should itself become the purest image of the state.

The army, put together from all clans and classes, is a striking embodiment of national unity and becomes one of the strongest ties in the structure of the state. Externally, it secures the stability of the state by its readiness to resist aggression and it is thus the expression of the state's resolve to assert itself. The army gives authority to the state's voice in the conflict of international interests ; it emphasizes the duty of the individual to subordinate himself to the whole, to the state, and it illustrates the responsibility of the individual for the whole.

In internal affairs the army typifies the will and the strength of the state in the face of revolutionary activity and thus fulfils the task of providing political order and security for all.

Like the state, the army does not exist for itself alone ; both are forms in which a nation expresses the will to live and survive.

This relation of the army to the state creates rights and obligations on both sides.

The army's prime duty towards the state consists in striving to attain the greatest efficiency, in enhancing its inward and outward worth, for in so doing it enhances the power and prestige of the state as well. It is the army's duty to fit into the general machinery of the state and to subordinate itself to the interests of the state. In any healthy political organism the government, whatever its form, disposes, within the limits laid down by law and constitution, of all the resources of the state, and therefore of the army, too. The army, in accordance with its nature, becomes the first servant of the state, of which it is a part. The army may therefore legitimately demand that its share in the life and being of the state shall be fully recognised. It is subordinate to the state as a whole, that is, to the state as represented by the political head, but it is not inferior or subordinate to single parts of the political organism. This brings us to the duties of the state towards the army. The army must have perfect freedom in its development and in its own special sphere, in so far as they are reconcilable with the general structure of the state. In internal and foreign policy, the military interests represented by the army have the same claim to existence as the other needs of the state. It is the business of

the political head to weigh them one against the other.

If the nature of the army be rightly comprehended as the purest and most striking image of the state itself, the state must recognize that in honouring the army it honours itself, and that its own prestige stands and falls with the prestige of the army. If it is right to insist that the army must show itself worthy of such recognition, it is also right to expect of the state that it will guarantee the army and the army's representatives their appropriate place in public affairs and shield them from attack. It is perfectly natural that this appreciation must find corresponding material expression, for a state needs not only willing servants, but satisfied servants. The higher the requirements and the performance, the greater must be the reward, for this economic law cannot be eliminated in adjusting the relation of army and state. It is true that the soldier does not serve for the sake of his pay, but a state acts very imprudently if it does not relieve its most loyal and valuable servant, as far as possible, from the daily anxieties of life and still more from the anxiety for his own and his family's future.

To return to the questions I asked at the outset :

What demand do I make of the army ? A political sense.

What demand do I make of the state ? Love of — the army.

To conclude : I have tried to treat my theme from a purely political point of view. The army should

be "political," in the sense in which I understand the word, i.e. it should grasp the conception of the "state"; but it certainly must not be "political" | in the party sense. "Hands off the army!" is my cry to *all* parties. The army serves the state and the - state alone, for it *is* the state.

MODERN CAVALRY

A few thoughts on its training and employment

CATCHWORDS are fatal. This is particularly true in military life, in which every precept should be the fruit of cool and clear thinking, because its application is a matter of life and death. The sense of responsibility should restrain us, in military matters, from the uncritical repetition of popular cries. "Cavalry is superfluous" is a specimen. If we add that other phrase, "The mechanization of war," we shall be on the way to the abolition of an arm which only requires to be developed on modern lines.

Why is there such a wide-spread dislike of mounted troops? There is, first of all, the natural ingrained antipathy of the pedestrian in the dust for the horseman who trots past apparently without trouble or care. Perhaps, too, the nimbus which has enveloped horse and rider from the earliest times irritates many for whom it represents the last memories of an age when the soldier's trade was still wrapped in lustre and splendour. They see in the squadrons a relic of the age of chivalry. There are indeed other sentiments and other voices. The displays of our cavalry regiments at tournaments are greeted with applause, and the spectators are just as pleased when the grey

uniforms line up on the green grass as they were with the gayer uniforms of other days. Our flourishing country riding clubs now arouse and encourage interest in the noble horse and its management. Cavalry regiments have no reason to complain of lack of volunteers. These sympathetic views are interesting, for they easily find public expression—even in parliaments, where the justifiable desire to economize always discovers a convenient and accommodating object in the horse and its fodder. Such reasons as these cannot be decisive for the soldier or sway military opinion. What, then, is the foundation of the doubts which exist, even in military circles, as to the utility of cavalry? Unfavourable opinions are sometimes influenced by a latent or open antagonism between different arms, or shall we say frankly, by envy; often by the secret feeling of inability to handle the unfamiliar arm, or to understand its peculiarities. Let us pass over both these motives and turn to graver questions.

In consequence of the development of firearms the time when large bodies of cavalry could be employed in close order is past. What, then, is the use of cavalry divisions? Certainly the day of the decisive cavalry charge is past. But that is not a matter of to-day or yesterday. We do not need the experiences of the Great War to prove a fact that had long been obvious to every thinking soldier. The intrinsic value of cavalry is not affected by the fact that the impossibility of its employment in close order was

not generally recognized and that our own cavalry, before the war, had a somewhat one-sided training. Nor is it affected by the fact that cavalry divisions were inadequately organized and equipped for modern requirements. It was easy to learn from such mistakes and nobody thought for a moment of training the newly-formed German cavalry for great battles in close order. Besides, in matters of cavalry organization, our hands were tied.

Conclusions that can be drawn from the Great War are much more weighty. It is true that at the beginning of the war, before fronts became rigid, our cavalry divisions did not accomplish what we had expected of them. The result would have been different had they been massed before or behind the free right wing, instead of being unintelligently distributed in units along the whole front and thus launched against fortified lines and hill positions. There was no scope for cavalry divisions in a close war of position, and their transformation into rifle divisions and employment as infantry was a natural development in view of the shortage of men. Only in the case of a break-through on the western front could cavalry, trained, equipped, and led on modern lines, have played a part again. In the east, where the conditions of warfare and topography were often more favourable, cavalry did useful work. In this connexion I can only refer to the instructive writings of General von Poseck.

It would be quite wrong to conclude from the

course of the war that cavalry divisions are superfluous and therefore harmful, however apt such an argument might appear at first sight. It is the right conclusion for a man to draw if he thinks that the next war will be a repetition of the last and assumes that nations will resort to trenches again. But he who believes that the war of position is the opposite of real war, that it may indeed lead to the gradual disintegration of the side that is weaker in material, but never to the decisive, annihilating victory which is the aim of all military thinking, and who therefore believes that this future victory must be sought in a war of movement, will not relinquish the arm whose essential characteristic is mobility.

Aircraft have not supplanted cavalry ; they co-operate with it. New and different duties, impossible for ground reconnaissance, have fallen to the lot of air reconnaissance ; on the border line between these two spheres the results gained by both arms supplement one another. Close reconnaissance remains the duty of cavalry, for its eyes are not obscured by an overcast sky. The cavalry division derives an accession of strength from its association with the air squadron.

The development of motor transport is one of the most urgent questions of military organization, but the phrase has become a slogan in the mouths of laymen and professionals. Many prophets already see the armies of the world transformed into armoured engines and the horseman entirely superseded by the

motor soldier. Things have not gone so far yet, and we shall do well to reckon with present conditions if we would satisfy the demands of the present and of the near future. We certainly ought not to close our eyes to the development of the motor vehicle and its employment for military purposes. We shall not ignore it, but rather try to lay the theoretical foundations and, as far as possible, the practical foundations for its use, but we must take care not to neglect existing, tested, serviceable appliances in favour of something that may be possible in the future. Let me briefly suggest that, for the present, roads, bridges, and mountains do not favour the mass employment of motor vehicles, and that further limits are drawn by the necessity for considering what material is to hand or what can be rapidly procured. The motor vehicle has two main military purposes : to provide a new arm in itself and to serve as a means of transport for men, guns, and supplies. Armoured cars constitute a special arm, alongside infantry, cavalry, and artillery, without replacing any one of these. Motor transport wagons can and should, if used correctly and with discrimination, provide cavalry divisions with a substantial accretion of strength.

The solution of the problem lies therefore in making full use of the products of technical science to extend and modernize what already exists, but not by substituting something dead for something alive. The living arm, i.e. our cavalry, should be

developed to its fullest perfection on modern lines without loss of its characteristics.

In the first period after the war, when everything had collapsed and had to be created anew, all kinds of queer schemes appeared. Such emergency creations of our civil war period as flying columns, in which all arms were mixed in accordance with the demand and supply of the moment, induced many people to conclude that the army of the future must consist of such formations, although they were incapable of organized training and useless in real war. Even the "unified" soldier appeared, who was to know everything, and so really knew nothing. The dictated peace of Versailles, which prescribed our military organization down to the minutest detail, put a rapid if unwelcome end to these and other notions. We were allowed seven infantry and three cavalry divisions, or in other words, twenty-one infantry regiments and eighteen cavalry regiments. The proportion was certainly striking. It passes our understanding why our enemies fixed on these figures ; it is hardly likely that they did it for our advantage. I never regretted the fixing of this proportion, but set to work with the resolve, in this as in other things, to make the best of it, i.e. to demand the highest possible standard of these cavalry divisions and to do everything for their training that experience had taught us and our limited resources permitted us to accomplish. In the following pages I propose to give a brief exposition of the ideas by which I have been guided.

I begin with the injunction which I gave to the cavalry at the beginning, viz. the cavalryman must show the greatest ability and the best performance of any soldier because, in addition to mastering his own peculiar art of riding, he must at the same time satisfy the demands made on the members of other units—a high aim, no doubt, but the soldier's profession demands ideals.

The first task of all was to maintain pride in the branch of the service, and where necessary to awaken it. The pride in one's unit is a very peculiar thing. Each branch of the service must consider itself to be the best, because healthy rivalry is thereby encouraged. Excrescences are easily observed and must be punctually and carefully trimmed by the directing hand. At the same time every sign of youthful arrogance should not be taken too seriously. The best remedy for this is generally life itself and its daily demands. Pride in a branch of the service should not be repressed, but steps should be taken to secure that the other branches have the same pride. The horse does not ennable the man ; it is the man who ennobles horse, weapon and machine. Their performance alone decides their worth.

Each branch of the service must be developed from its own resources ; it must form itself. In the first period of reconstruction we were compelled, in order to make as even a distribution as possible of our painfully depleted corps of officers, to appoint infantry and artillery officers to cavalry regiments, as the

reduction of strength in the first two arms had been relatively much greater. This was an emergency measure only. It is an essential condition of healthy natural development that each branch of the service should supply its own officers, at any rate up to and including the regimental commander. An infantry man may sit his horse ever so well, he may even understand horses better than many a trooper, yet he will not make a good commander of a cavalry regiment. He will always lack the experience of instruction and training which years of practice give. He may learn to lead his regiment in battle, but not to prepare it for battle. He will lack prestige and the confidence of his subordinates, and these are the things that matter in war and peace alike. It would be a sign of bad organization if the cavalry ever lacked suitable candidates for vacant regimental commands. Beware, then, of casual experiments which merely indicate a lack of common sense or good will, if they do not spring from some futile notion of adjusting seniority.

Training of all ranks up to and including the regimental commander in any branch of the service should, on principle, be deliberately one-sided in character. This in no wise alters the necessity for making oneself acquainted, in good time and in a measure proportionate to one's rank, with the nature and capacity of the other arms. The theoretical knowledge supplied by the general school foundation, can be made secure in practice by the temporary

attachment of officers to arms other than their own ; but not by any hard and fast system of transfer. Whoever has begun as an infantry or cavalry officer, apart from exceptions due to compelling external circumstances, must end as an infantry or cavalry officer. The general alone must raise himself above the sphere of any particular arm. Consequently it is permissible for specially qualified generals from other branches to take over the command of larger cavalry units, because in this case the handling of troops and general tactical training take precedence of the training peculiar to any single arm. It should nevertheless be the rule that commanders of cavalry divisions should likewise be cavalry men. The gap between the ranks of regimental and divisional commander arising from the fact that we are not permitted to have cavalry brigade commanders, may be expediently and profitably bridged by the attachment of officers to other arms or by some other temporary form of employment.

It is essential for the development of any arm that it should find and train its own replacements. The regimental commander must be allowed a free, unhindered selection of young officers. If he does not set about it in the right way, then he fails in an important part of his duty and should not be permitted to retain his position. The refreshingly large supply of suitable applicants allows the commander to take his pick. In making this selection he must be guided solely by the interests of his branch of the service,

and in particular by the interests of his regiment. It is monstrous that any higher authority should deprive him of this responsibility, thus substituting other considerations for the appraisement of individual worth, and such a course can only lead to a decline in the quality of recruits. This applies of course not to cavalry alone, but to all branches and also *mutatis mutandis* to the recruitment of the rank and file.

If we turn now to questions of cavalry training we shall see that the magnitude of the tasks imposed requires an intensified form of training, first and foremost for the senior commanders. It was difficult, even before the war, to provide them with practical exercises, as the assembly of larger formations for purposes of manoeuvre and instruction was limited to a few rare occasions. It is to some extent an improvement that we have decided not to practise expensive cavalry battles any more, but on the other hand there remains the necessity for the most frequent possible accumulation of larger cavalry formations and, compared with past times, this necessity has grown more urgent with the increasing radius of action. Although the existing training grounds may suffice for battle practice if properly varied use is made of them, nevertheless preparation for field operations demands the exercise of cavalry in open country in combination with modern information services, motor transport units, and aeroplanes. Battle practice, which is directly connected with the

similar practice of the other arms, is secured by the participation of mounted regiments in the manœuvres of infantry divisions. The attachment of cavalry officers of the higher ranks to these manœuvres, even when their unit does not participate directly, and to other exercises of other arms, and to special courses gives them further opportunity of practical training. In addition, there remains an ample field for theoretical instruction in large scale tactical tours and war games, and in special cavalry tours of more limited scope, all of which should be supplemented by private study of the history of war. I should like to mention one point in connexion with such study: the history of war is particularly rich in instructive examples of the employment of cavalry. It is only a matter of separating the external and the variable from the permanent. The great underlying principles remain the same, even though the employment of cavalry has to be adapted to changed conditions.

There is something to be learned from everything, even from mistakes ; only let us not think our predecessors more stupid than ourselves because they had not our experience and our inventions. No longer like Frederick at the end of the day do we hurl our jingling squadrons upon the tottering foe. The modern Seydlitz will lead his well-nursed troopers with their mobile artillery behind the flank and rear of the enemy in order to join with the advancing infantry and other units in securing the final decision. The new Napoleon's cavalry divisions, reinforced with

riflemen and long range artillery on motor lorries, will outstrip the Prussian troops defeated at Jena and give them the *coup de grâce* on the Oder. For later examples we may refer to the war between the Northern and Southern States in America and for the most recent to the activity of the Russian cavalry under Budjeni and that of the Turks against the Greeks.

In general, we must expect the cavalry leader, and indeed any general officer, to regard himself until the end of his career, far more than was usual before the war, not only as a teacher but also as a pupil.

Riding is the most prominent feature of the special training peculiar to this arm. The management and employment of the horse are certainly not the concern of cavalry alone ; they are common to all arms but, of course, they have a very special place in cavalry training. The aim of military horsemanship is not only to convey the rider and his weapon to the desired place, but to reach it with the greatest possible speed and security, while at the same time sparing the horse. For this a thorough, expert training of rider and horse is required. Superficially trained riders can be mounted on semi-raw horses and brought to a certain pitch of military usefulness, but they are not "cavalry." Cavalry cannot be improvised, nor can the demands made on cavalry ever be satisfied by a mere mounted yeomanry.

The quality of the instructor is as important for mounted troops as the quality of the horses. We had

great difficulty at first, when forming our new cavalry, in obtaining a corps of qualified instructors, but on the whole the obstacles may now be regarded as overcome. The progress made in the art of riding is gratifying and self-evident. The value of riding school exercise, which was questioned by many, has now been fully recognized once more as a means to the thorough training of man and horse, remembering always that it is not an end in itself but a means to the end, which is riding in the open. Greater value has been assigned to independent riding rather than to riding in formation, as it is now recognized that fighting value lies, more than before, in the individual horseman rather than in the close troop. For this reason we welcome the participation of cavalry in tournaments that encourage first-class exhibitions of fancy riding and jumping. It must not be forgotten, however, that these exhibition performances, as in all forms of sport, have no military value in themselves but only in their effect of raising the general average of equestrian performance.

The encouragement of riding in the open, particularly of hunting and similar forms of cross-country riding, has a direct influence on cavalry training ; also the encouragement of racing, for which there is no substitute, although the nature of this sport will permit only the few to indulge in it. Endeavours to make these forms of sport accessible not merely to officers but in a large measure to non-commissioned officers and men are to be welcomed. It would be

very desirable if the army could be induced to take up polo. Its value for training in horsemanship is incontestable. The obstacle to the spread of polo is the expense, and this will remain as long as we are dependent on foreign countries for the supply of ponies. If it were possible to find a horse suitable for polo in the light East Prussian breed, and if the players could be supplied with service ponies, the other difficulties could be surmounted. It is not necessary for such military teams to enter at once into competition with international players, but this useful sport might well be developed within the cavalry. Speaking generally, there can be no two opinions as to the advantages of participation in international competitions, under expert supervision, of course, and granted the tact which is so necessary on such occasions. We must clearly understand, however, that this participation of the army in sport requires not only good will and indulgence, but also material support. It is highly undesirable that riders should be dependent on private assistance or that riding should be a matter of money. Of course, to take this view one must be convinced that riding for sport is not a private luxury but an indispensable factor in army training.

Swimming takes a peculiar place in cavalry training, and if advantage be taken of existing aids it can and must be encouraged to such a degree that most of our Central European rivers need offer no obstacle to mounted units.

I cannot close this section without emphasizing the fact that the high degree of efficiency in riding which our German cavalry has again attained, in spite of every obstacle, is due to the industry and the example of its first Inspector, General von Poseck.

The object of riding is to bring the weapon to bear on the enemy. If the cavalryman leaves his horse he becomes an infantryman, and he can hardly escape the demands made on the latter both with regard to the use of weapons and of ground, except that in cavalry fighting action develops more rapidly and there is less time for preparatory measures. This is the concern of the commander rather than of the rank and file. Careful training in the use of the carbine and light machine gun remains of decisive importance, as also does co-operation with heavy arms, which are just as indispensable in cavalry fighting as in infantry fighting. Even the heavy machine gun plays an important part in cavalry fighting.

The fire fight of cavalry has this peculiarity : it is to be expected from the very start that the action must be broken off once the object is attained, and that it will be resumed elsewhere. It is rare for a cavalry attack to be fought out hour after hour to the bitter end as in the case of infantry, and this permits greater extension at the cost of depth. The transition from movement on horseback to development of the action on foot is of decisive importance. The principle is this : the approach on horseback must be as close

as position and ground permit but, on the other hand, not so close that quiet continuation on foot is imperilled. The choice of a position for the led horses is of the greatest importance. Their safety must not be jeopardized, because with their loss cavalry loses its instrument of mobility. Yet they may not be left so far behind that time is unnecessarily lost in regaining them.

The disposition of led horses, vehicles, etc., must be supervised with the utmost severity in peace time manœuvres, because there is no enemy fire to administer a drastic corrective to mere convenience. Also, if there are no airmen taking part, it requires much energy and imagination to compel men to appreciate the possibility of an air attack.

It may occasionally be advisable to enlist the aid of infantry for the individual training of cavalry in musketry and its application in battle ; nevertheless cavalry must strive to be entirely independent in this department also.

We have long been accustomed to the association of cavalry and light artillery. It would lead me too far to deal with this subject at length here. I would only observe that intense horizontal fire effectively lightens the work of cavalry divisions, and that many of the objectives assigned to cavalry cannot be reached with the desired speed without the high-angle fire of medium and heavy artillery. It thus becomes the cavalryman's duty to make himself familiar with these arms, their mobility, employment, and effect.

The training of cavalry units in pioneer duties and the training of special pioneer sections must be chiefly concerned with the maintenance and assurance of mobility, i.e. in the first place with the passing of obstacles and watercourses, and the provision and repair of roads, particularly for the motor transport units in the rear. The old practice in demolition with explosives must not be allowed to lapse.

The intelligence service is one of the most important branches of cavalry training. As we emerged from the war with entirely new experience of intelligence, and as further immense progress has been made since, we are faced with the greatest possibilities in the future, and these may tend not least to the advantage of cavalry. This is good enough reason for the cavalryman to occupy himself closely with all forms of intelligence. No limit can be set to individual training and technical development in this service. For the effective use of "intelligence" every unit, from the regiment up, requires an Intelligence Office, through which pass all the threads, both in and out. Only in this way can there be any guarantee of the necessary co-operation and economic use of all the instruments, both human and technical : patrols, airmen, telegraph, telephone, and wireless telegraphy. The co-operation of the commander with this intelligence department will be no less close than with the artillery commander. Exercises on a large or small scale in the transmission, receipt, and use of information can be practised, but should be preceded

by careful individual training. Exercises can also be devised with maps.

The association of air reconnaissance with cavalry reconnaissance is unfortunately theoretical only, as far as Germany is concerned. A knowledge of the peculiarities and capacity of the aerial arm is required before we can decide what demands can appropriately be made on air reconnaissance. This again provides the cavalry commander with a new and important field of activity. A combination of the two methods of reconnaissance will show how they supplement one another, how the spheres of their activity touch and even overlap without one arm replacing the other.

We live in an age when motor transport is taking a larger part in military as in industrial organization. This is no place for a close discussion of the "motorization" of troops. But as motor transport contributes enormously to the increase of mobility, it concerns cavalry first and foremost. The endeavour to make heavy arms follow cavalry at the same speed has always been important, and becomes more so if we desire to increase, on the one hand, the firing strength and, on the other, the independence of cavalry. It is therefore of the utmost importance for cavalry that we should discover, by theoretical study and practical experiment, to what extent we are now able to rely on motor transport for these accretions of strength, and also what we may expect of the capacity of such units ; how they are to be employed, and above all, how their function is to be reconciled with that of the mounted

man. Thus the knowledge of the nature of motor transport and of the motor forms a new side of the cavalryman's education.

I cannot conclude these brief remarks on training without insisting how fundamentally important is the actual education of the troop—what we call internal service in the widest sense. The formation of the character of the individual man, the improvement of his mentality, the education of the non-commissioned officers, the control of the officers, all these are questions which are not peculiar to cavalry. Care of the man during and after his period of service is an obligation common to all arms. If I mention this aspect of service here, it is to utter a warning lest the education and welfare of the individual should be neglected amid the host of training branches and the manifold claims of daily routine. It is right that care of his horse should be one of the prime responsibilities laid on the trooper. Not only is the horse a valuable article entrusted to his care, but it is the weapon which it is the soldier's first duty to keep fit for service. Regarded from this angle the much despised stable duty acquires an ideal value. It is a joy to walk through bright, clean, airy stables filled with well-fed glossy horses, but the eye should then be greeted, on the other side of the barrack yard, by habitable and comfortable quarters, the home of cheerful comradeship, in which the man can feel at ease after his hard day's work. The numerous serious objects of training can only be attained when

the individual man is educated in habits of willing co-operation. The Commander must encourage the production, among the non-commissioned officers, of energetic and intelligent helpers in all departments, especially in that of riding. But the officer must never allow the reins to be taken from his hand ; he is and remains the teacher, the leader, the example.

The composition of the larger cavalry formations is a special problem. Some have favoured the brigade, with auxiliary arms, as the basic unit, and have proposed to form cavalry divisions and cavalry corps by the fusion of several brigades. I think the fighting value of a reinforced brigade is insufficient for most of the tasks which fall to the lot of cavalry, and that it would be better to choose as the norm a formation which contains in itself sufficient fighting value for the solution of its problems. Further, it is desirable that this fighting unit should at the same time be an independent peace formation, as is the case with infantry. We thus arrive at the cavalry division, divided into three brigades of two regiments each. This tripartite structure satisfies the desire for the maximum of elasticity, and the reinforced brigade of two regiments is enabled to discharge most of the duties which fall to it inside the division. The number of regiments does not exceed the capacity of the divisional commander in matters of training and supervision. If we add to the regiments the heavy arms which organically belong to them, and to the division the three batteries of light field artillery as

well as pioneer and intelligence sections, we only need add transport and supply columns and the basic formation is fixed. This should be the formation of cavalry divisions in peace time also ; but it is insufficient for most of the demands that will be made on divisions in war. The necessary reinforcements must be assigned with reference to the nature of each particular task allotted to the division. These tasks are so different, so varied, that even the allotment of infantry, artillery, pioneers, aircraft, and train must be left to be determined by circumstances. I think it is a mistake to exceed the proportions here given and commit oneself to *reinforced* cavalry divisions as the norm. That would be a sign of poor mental adaptability, and the consequence might be precisely that the *normal* division might be inadequate to its task and wrongly organized.

This consideration leads us automatically to a brief outline of the most important tasks which can be imposed on cavalry. We can thus test the correctness of our theory of cavalry training.

The commencement of hostilities imposes on the cavalry, which is complete in its formation and requires little or no mobilization, the task of covering the advance and protecting the frontier. This task may be performed defensively or offensively. In the first case broad and thinly-manned fronts will be created, controlled by an extensively developed network of intelligence and supported by natural or artificial obstacles. For example, inundations can be

caused, while strong and mobile reserves are established in the rear. The air force takes over the distant reconnaissance, to detect and observe the enemy's advance. To discharge this defensive function cavalry will require the assistance of infantry (frontier defence formations).

If the task is to be executed offensively, in order to advance the covering screen, the enemy's frontier defence must be penetrated. This demands cohesion and as unexpected an assault as possible, together with an increase of the fighting power of the division, particularly by the addition of artillery and the bringing up of infantry to hold the ground that has been won. If the field is cleared of the enemy, then ground reconnaissance begins to supplement the distant reconnaissance by air. It is also the duty of the cavalry to supply information collected from the statements of inhabitants, to bring in prisoners, intercept telephonic conversations, and interrupt hostile communications.

The war may also be opened by larger, independent cavalry operations, if the formations destined therefor are ready, before the general army masses can come into action. The object of such operations may be to cause, by fighting or by destruction, a lasting dislocation of the enemy's mobilization and deployment. The cavalry division requires for such enterprises a substantial reinforcement, appropriate to the special demands of the task set. This reinforcement must not be allowed to interfere with mobility, for mobility

is the prime condition of success in such enterprises. For extensive operations of this nature cavalry requires the support of infantry ; because without this its firing strength would fall too rapidly. The protection of quarters and communications constantly demands the employment of forces which cannot be detached from cavalry without causing excessive weakness. This infantry support must be maintained and made mobile by motor transport ; otherwise it becomes mere ballast. The variety of objectives assigned to a cavalry division necessitates a supply of mobile but effective artillery. Heavy horizontal fire is particularly valuable. It allows the battle to be begun at long range and forces the enemy to take counter measures, which only begin to function when the mobile attacker has already taken advantage of his artillery protection to withdraw out of range of a superior defence. The employment of long range artillery against important targets like railway junctions is frequently an object in itself, and the other arms in that case merely serve to protect the artillery. It will often be necessary, in order to attain the allotted goal, to throw in the whole fighting strength as rapidly and as resolutely as possible and to press the battle to a finish.

In such extensive operations, when the base is left far behind, it is obvious that the intelligence service—especially the wireless service—plays an important rôle. Co-operation with the airmen is of very particular importance, and suitable aircraft formations

must be placed at the disposal of the cavalry division. From the information thus supplied the cavalry gains substantial liberty and security in the choice of its objectives. Close communication with the base, with home, or with the main force, will soon be interrupted, often as early as the first or second day. This demands great independence in all matters of replacement, and therefore a liberal allowance of mobile columns for the supply of munitions, provender, and materials. The size of these supply columns will depend on the nature of the objective, as their systematic distribution has the fault of being unsuitable in most cases, usually supplying the superfluous in abundance and omitting the necessary. The conveyance of adequate artillery munitions will be the chief difficulty, and the demand for these may impose undesirable limitations on the scope of the enterprise. Transport aeroplanes may possibly be of assistance here. The supply of provender and material obtainable locally is usually limited, rarely adequate. If communications with the base break down altogether, steps must be taken to establish a supplementary depot. On the other hand, efforts must be made at base head-quarters to maintain or take over communications between the supplementary base and the advancing cavalry. The supply columns must be adequately armed for these operations. It is not sufficient to provide drivers and escorts with carbines and light machine guns. Independent and effective covering troops must be detailed and supplied with

the same means of transport as the supply columns themselves.

The kind of cavalry-activity outlined in the preceding pages may be effectively prosecuted during the course of war and not merely at the beginning, especially in war areas which are remote from the direct influence of the main conflict.

Cavalry divisions operating as part of the main army must take over the task of supplementing and intensifying the reconnaissance already effected by aircraft. There is little that is new to be said in this regard, in view of the very thorough training of our cavalry. Let me only indicate the necessity of withdrawing intervening cavalry in good time as the two general army fronts approach one another.

At this stage of the struggle there may be a certain cessation of cavalry activity. Such a pause will be urgently necessary for the restoration of fighting strength, if the division is returning from exhausting special duty or reconnaissance. The auxiliary forces allotted to the cavalry for its operations hitherto will now be detached and employed elsewhere. The division will either be withdrawn to the rear or posted on an open flank, which it can cover by reconnaissance without substantially interfering with the necessary rest.

As the issue of the battle draws nearer, the cavalry may substantially influence the proportion of strength of the two sides by attracting the attention of enemy

forces and drawing them away from the front. Should it succeed in threatening the enemy's advance from the flank it may be able, by the repetition of such manœuvres, to draw off substantial covering forces towards itself, especially if the enemy has no cavalry available for the purpose, and is thus compelled to employ infantry, in which case the loss of time and strength becomes important. This shows how desirable it is to have one's own advance covered by cavalry on an open flank. Reinforcement with infantry will not be so necessary for operations on a flank, but the allotment of long range artillery to the cavalry will be advantageous. A task of this kind is especially suited to the nature of cavalry, as the characteristics of flank fighting are rapid seizure of the favourable point of attack, surprise, prompt disappearance after attainment of success, and re-appearance for a fresh stroke elsewhere.

In the decisive hour of the battle the cavalry endeavours to deliver its blow from some position which its mobility has enabled it to reach and from which it can make itself peculiarly troublesome to the enemy. Such a position will be the enemy's flank and, if possible, his rear. Here, above all, the most advantageous objectives will be found in the artillery positions which the enemy has established well in rear, and in staff head-quarters and intelligence centres. Close communication with head-quarters is essential at this stage, in order to facilitate a combined persistence in the decisive effort. Here, too, mobility

and artillery fire remain the deciding factors. Co-operation with tank divisions may be advantageous.

Cavalry recovers a measure of freedom once the decision has been obtained, when the pursuit provides it with new tasks. Success will depend on prudent leadership, mobility, and firing strength.

These examples of the employment of cavalry must suffice. My sole object has been to show that the days of cavalry, if trained, equipped and led on modern lines, are not numbered, and that its lances may still flaunt their pennants with confidence in the wind of the future.

THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF

I PROPOSE to speak of the Chief of the General Staff in war only, of his position and function as assistant to the Commander-in-Chief.

Let me briefly explain the personal experience which forms the basis of my observations. At the beginning of the war I was Chief of the General Staff to a Prussian Corps, then Chief of the General Staff to a composite army of German and Austro-Hungarian troops ; after that I was Chief of the General Staff to a whole army front of the same composite character. Then I was Chief of the General Staff on another front formed by an amalgamation of German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian armies, then I was similarly employed with an Austro-Hungarian Army, then with a whole Austro-Hungarian front, and finally I was Chief of the General Staff to the Turkish army in the field. I have had to do with the German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish Commanders-in-Chief and likewise with the armies, corps, and divisions of all four nations, and with the Chiefs of their General Staffs.

In spite of all my experience I must confess I find it hard to give a clear definition of the term "Chief of the General Staff" ; yet as there is much uncertainty as to the function of this influential officer, I should

like to make certain, as far as I can, that his importance is neither exaggerated nor underestimated. I do not wish to describe my experiences, but to draw conclusions from them.

As I reflect on the difficulty of giving a short and clear definition of the term "Chief of the General Staff," a trifling incident comes to my mind. My Chief Quartermaster, Colonel Hentsch, that distinguished and unfortunate officer who has been so often mentioned and so much misunderstood, was once asked by one of the many amateur visitors to Head-quarters, "But what *is* a Q.M.G.?" And Hentsch replied in his dry, sarcastic way, "The Q.M.G. does everything the C.G.S. can't do, or doesn't want to do." If we write "C.G.S." for "Q.M.G." and "C.-in-C." for "C.G.S." we shall be getting near the truth, but we shall not have reached bed-rock. We shall have to dig somewhat deeper and proceed more methodically to obtain a clear view of the matter.

The C.G.S., in our modern view, is the adviser and assistant assigned to the C.-in-C. and he has a full responsible share in the tasks with which the C.-in-C. is charged.

There has not always been a Chief of the General Staff. Ulysses was perhaps a kind of C.G.S. to the Greek army, but no "song or legend"** mentions a C.G.S. to Alexander, to Hannibal, to Cæsar or to any of the great leaders of later times until very near our

* Des Königs Namen meldet kein Lied, kein Heldenbuch.—UHLAND.

own day. Neither Marlborough nor Prince Eugene shared his glory with a colleague. Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII required no High Command beneath, beside, or above them, and Frederick the Great directed his regiments to battle from the mansion roof at Rossbach and from the saddle at Leuthen. We need not imagine, of course, that the decisions of these and countless other victorious leaders always sprang, like Pallas, from the head of Zeus. As prudent men, they will have listened to the counsel of experienced soldiers and assigned the details of their operations to assistants, but the history of war nowhere mentions that other persons shared their authority or it has relegated such colleagues to documentary anonymity. The General Staff used to lay out the camp, throw up fortifications, reconnoitre the terrain, examine deserters, and organize the supply of flour and bread. All this was important and necessary, but the conduct of the operation lay with the Commander himself. Napoleon had no C.G.S. with his army in the field. Berthier was never more than the great man's chief clerk. As for his opponents, Wellington's reputation as a leader remains undivided, and although Prince Schwarzenberg no doubt had a numerous General Staff, history does not record a single name. It is in the Prussian Army, in the association of Blücher and Gneisenau, that the relation of C.-in-C. to C.G.S. is first exemplified.

In the long period of European peace which followed the Napoleonic Wars, the evolution of the

General Staff itself was but slow, and it took various forms. Lord Kitchener said to me as late as 1908, "In England we have no General Staff at all, as you understand it. I am just trying to create one like yours for the Indian Army." But even with us in Prussia, the typical home of thorough, methodical military organization, the General Staff developed only step by step and in the face of a variety of obstacles, and the position of the C.G.S. was directly involved in this gradual development. It is well known what difficulty the elder Moltke had in enforcing his authority as C.G.S. on the army commanders, until his own personality, success, and the King's confidence secured him his due influence.

A history of the General Staff, compiled from all the archives and illustrating its development from the beginning down to our own day, would be not only of great military interest but of still greater human interest. It would be a history of quiet, positive work ; it would tell of arrogance and haughty acquiescence, of vanity and envy, of all human weaknesses, of the fight between genius and bureaucracy, and of the hidden causes of victory and defeat ; it would take the radiance from many a halo and it would not be lacking in tragedy. This history will never be written and is better unwritten. General Staff Officers are anonymous.

It was natural that General Staffs and with them the position of the C.G.S. should develop differently in the armies of different countries. Owing to my

imperfect knowledge of this most difficult subject : the influence of the C.G.S. on operations—I shall explain its difficulty presently—I must refrain from discussing the conditions which obtained in the General Staffs of our opponents in the War. In the case of our Austro-Hungarian allies the formal limitations imposed on the activity of the General Staff and thereby on the C.G.S. were undoubtedly too narrow, which was very bad for our cause, for the General Staff that had passed through the school of Conrad von Hötzendorf was undoubtedly far superior to the staff formed by the whole body of general officers. In Bulgaria, for reasons that can be readily understood, there was as yet no General Staff trained and organized on the same lines as our own. There were instead among the commanding officers themselves certain experienced and energetic persons who resented criticism, even in matters of detail. Thus it came about that little was heard of the Chief of Staff. When we first began to co-operate with the Bulgarians there was no such officer except at the General Head-quarters of that distinguished Commander-in-Chief, General Jekow. The authority of this Chief of Staff was by no means clearly defined, which limited his activity, but this difficulty was solved by his early death. I must mention here that my collaboration with the Bulgarian Supreme Command and all the Bulgarian staffs, and not least my relations with the superlatively sagacious Bulgarian monarch are among the most agreeable memories of my service as Chief of Staff.

In Turkey the association of a German C.G.S. with a Turkish C.-in-C. was an accomplished fact, as is evident from my own official relation, and that of my predecessor, to the generalissimo, Enver Pasha.

Just as the position of Chief of the General Staff developed differently at different times and in different places until it reached its present importance, so it naturally varies in degree. Between the position of C.G.S. to the Commander-in-Chief and that of Chief of Staff to a division lies the whole military gamut from the supreme direction of war down to the detailing of a unit for action. The principles remain the same, no matter whether the order signed by the Chief begins, "By Command of His Majesty, etc." or requires the withdrawal of a firing-line by 500 metres.

What matters is the answer to these questions : Who gives orders ? Who *can* give orders ? Who *may* give orders ? All power of command springs in the last resort from God and a man's own strength. Speaking as soldiers, not as theologians, we can agree that all power of command is *Dei gratia* ; that is to say, it springs from a relation of superiority and inferiority that has its roots in the supernatural, no matter whether its outward manifestation be monarchical or democratic. In military life, at any rate, the call to command comes to one definite person, the Commander-in-Chief. Will he be worthy of this consecration and equal to its responsibilities ? It is the answering of this question that leads to the appointment of a C.G.S., as already indicated in the preceding

historical sketch. The king, who is king only because he is the leader, the king consecrated as general by Samuel's anointing oil needed no C.G.S. Many another king sent out his general to win him battles and provinces, and their example has been followed by well governed commonwealths like Carthage and Rome down to the France and England of our own day. But when views based on history or tradition or evolved from political necessity summoned the wearer of the crown to the command of his army, or when monarchical considerations ensured at least the appointment of some representative of the dynasty in his stead and placed members of princely houses at the head of his armies, then the necessity for giving powerful support to these "hereditary" generals became self-evident. This explains the appearance of outstanding personages by the side of royal generals, without it being necessary for us to quote examples from recent wars. The adaptability and even the subordination shown by "hereditary" generals in the face of the recognized superior capacity of their advisers fills an especially glorious page in the history of generalship, so rich in examples of renunciation.

We are now closer to a solution of our problem, for the relation of the Commander to his Chief of Staff is the deciding factor. "Who gives orders?" we ask once more and reply, "One man." Hence the oft-repeated injunction of Frederick the Great to his officers not to hold councils of war, in which, he says,

the timid always prevail. Of course, the council may consist, on the other hand, of irresponsible firebrands, for in councils the responsibility of the individual member is generally greatly diminished. It follows then that the Commander himself takes the responsibility for giving orders and must listen to the advice of one man alone : the Chief of Staff assigned to him. The decision is taken by these two together and when they emerge from their privacy there is one decision and one only. They have reached it together ; they two are one. If there was any difference of opinion, then by evening the two parties to this happy matrimonial council no longer know which gave way. The outside world and the history of war learn nothing of any tiff. In this unification of two personalities lies the security of command. It is all the same whether the order is signed by the General Officer Commanding or, according to our old custom, by the Chief of Staff on his behalf ; the G.O.C. always issues his orders through his Chief of Staff and even the senior subordinate commanders must obey without opposition because the Chief of Staff can only issue orders in the name of the G.O.C. There is no appeal to the G.O.C. from any order issued by the Chief of Staff ; any such appeal would be the most unwarrantable insubordination. What the Chief of Staff can order without the knowledge of the G.O.C. is a matter for them alone ; no third party has anything to say to it. When the Chief of Staff issues orders independently he must know that he is acting as his G.O.C. would

wish him to act, and the latter, if he allows the Chief of Staff to issue orders, must be sure that they are such as he would issue himself. Thus the relation between the two is built up entirely on confidence ; if there is no confidence they should part without delay. A relation of this kind cannot be reduced to rule ; it will and must always vary according to situation and personality. Thus it is obvious that the correct combination of personalities is of decisive importance for success.

It is only by the appointment of the right Chief of Staff that a Commander's brilliant talents for leadership can be fully displayed or that compensation can be provided for his weaknesses. The stronger personality will usually assert itself without attracting attention from outside, although it may of course fritter its energies away in silent and fruitless antagonism. These are human weaknesses that cannot be avoided. If we seek a division of rôle between the Commanding Officer and his Chief of Staff we shall find that the external authority, i.e. over the troops, is reserved to the Commander alone, and more so in the lower commands than in the higher. As far as the unit is concerned there is only the one revered and inspiring leader ; the Chief of Staff has opportunity enough of earning its confidence and thanks. On the other hand, the Commander should make it a rule not to know and order what it is not necessary for him to know and order. Thus he must leave the wearisome daily routine to the Chief of Staff

in order to keep his own mind fresh and free for the great decisions.

This brings us back to the question of responsibility, which is so supremely important in military life. The Commanding Officer bears the outward and formal responsibility towards those above him and those below. He takes the glory of success, and nothing more humiliating can befall him than when, for some indulgent reason or other, the responsibility for failure is assigned, not to him, but to his Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff is responsible to his own conscience as fully as his Commanding Officer. No memorandum to the effect that he disagreed with an order of his C.O. can absolve him from this responsibility. It is not permissible that any important decision in his sphere should be taken against his will. If he cannot carry his point—and it is the Commanding Officer's right to have his way in the end—he must resign his post in favour of someone else who is in better accord with the Commander. Differences of opinion can be harmonized, but an unbridgeable gulf between C.O. and Chief of Staff in a matter of prime importance can only damage the cause, because it diminishes the partners' confidence in one another.

I have tried in the preceding pages to develop the ideal relation between Commanding Officer and Chief of Staff without concealing the inevitable difficulties. The first of these lies in effecting a correct combination of persons. It is all to the good if

previous co-operation in peace time, or acquaintance, or friendship, has established a close and trusting union. It is dangerous if such previous relations were based on similarity of temperament, or perhaps on similarity of weaknesses, or if the personality of the one is entirely subservient to the stronger but not superior personality of the other. The association of discordant natures appears equally undesirable, whereas temperaments which offer contrasts may mix very well.

Apart from these difficulties, which can only be removed by great discernment or by happy accident, there remains only one condition of harmonious combination, viz. that uniformity of mental attitude towards military science which is only to be obtained by identical training and schooling. Ability cannot be equated. Yet this uniformity will often be lacking if there is too great a disparity in years between the Commander and his Chief of Staff, for this implies corresponding differences in military schooling. Perhaps this uniformity was lacking in the last war ; perhaps, in an age when so much was done to develop the General Staff, too little was done to extend the training of commanding officers. Not all generals had passed through the severe school of Moltke and Schlieffen, which had given even the weaker members of the General Staff something of the genius of the art of war, nor did they, conscious of their inferiority, yield to the influence of a younger colleague.

The remedy will lie in the most carefully continued

training of all, especially of the older officers, to the very limit of their capacity and therewith of their right to remain in their positions. Then we shall secure the correct mixture of the two great components of successful leadership : experience and youth.

THE ESSENTIAL THING

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THE essential thing is action. Action has three stages : the decision born of thought, the order or preparation for execution, and the execution itself. All three stages are governed by the will. The will is rooted in character, and for the man of action character is of more critical importance than intellect. Intellect without will is worthless, will without intellect is dangerous.

I shall endeavour to trace the evolution of action from its components in all three stages. Comparisons between the soldier, whom I select as the type of person whose business is action, and others on whom action is incumbent, will readily present themselves. The soldier, then, as a typical man of action, must be equipped with the knowledge and education necessary for the accomplishment of his task. It is good but not necessary that he should have had time in the course of his professional studies to prepare himself for the great moment of his life—the moment of action. The value of the knowledge acquired by study must not be over-estimated. The soldier faced with the necessity for independent decision must not mentally search the pages of his professional encyclopædia nor seek to remember how the great generals of history, from Alexander to

Zieten, would have acted in a similar case. Such knowledge as that derived from the study of the history of war is only of living practical value when it has been digested, when the permanent and the important has been extracted from the wealth of detail and has been incorporated with a man's own mental resources—and it is not every man who has the gift for this. There was a certain general, now dead but universally esteemed and respected in his day, who was a veritable fountain of information. Whenever he was asked to express an opinion on some military situation he would always begin by saying, "In such a situation Frederick the Great would say," etc., and then would follow some invariably apposite quotation. But the best quotation, the best parallel present to the mind will not relieve the soldier of the difficulty of decision.

Military geography was a part of that positive knowledge to which great value was once attached in the army. Thus the senior officers of the Prussian General Staff used to bear the title "Chief of a Theatre of War." Many will still remember with horror the so-called "military-geographical" descriptions and the endless industry lavished on the accumulation of details concerning possible theatres of war. In August, 1914, when we were slowly approaching the frontier, the G.O.C. assembled us officers of the General Command in his saloon on the first morning in order to prepare us for our allotted task by reading a "military-geographical" description of Belgium. In a short time I, the Chief of Staff, and my faithful

senior assistant, Major Wetzell, as he was then, were sunk in deep sleep—very pardonable after the laborious days and sleepless nights of the period of mobilization from which we had just emerged. Well, we found our way to the very gates of Paris in spite of our ignorance of military geography, nor had I any special preparation for Serbia and Palestine afterwards. This implies no condemnation of geographical education, for all general education enhances the intellectual value of man and therefore of the man whose profession is action along with the rest.

I have nothing to say against theoretical training, and certainly nothing against practical training. Whoever would become master of his craft must have served as apprentice and journeyman ; only a genius can bridge gaps in this sequence of instruction. Every man of action is an artist, and he must know the material with which, in which, and against which he works before he begins his task.

There is a certain resemblance between Leonardo's sketch-book and Frederick the Great's sketches for manœuvres. Both exhibit genius at work. Man is the most difficult, the most recalcitrant and the most grateful, the most faithful and the most treacherous of all materials, and the soldier, like all rulers, works first and foremost with men. A youthful school of military writers recently discovered the term "General Psychologos." Platitudes have their periods of rejuvenation. As though the true arts of statesmanship and war had ever been imaginable without psychology !

Psychology is the first among the arts of government, the most important and perhaps the rarest of the soldier's gifts. Its exercise in appreciation of mass and detail carries all the potentialities of success, but also of the gravest error and disappointment. Psychology must not be judged solely from the point of view of the man who believes himself wrongly used. Judgment on leadership must be based on its effect on the mass, but the mass has no *right* to such judgment.

Thus equipped, man faces his task. The inner qualities he brings to bear on it escape all regulation and description, although they are the essential factors in action. Genius is character.

The man of action fixes his goal in relation to his task, be it self-assigned or dictated by circumstances and higher authority—for what man of action was ever wholly free? He will always fix this goal somewhat beyond the point he feels to be really attainable. He will also leave a margin for luck, but wise restraint and an artistic sense are necessary to prevent him from fixing his goal too far outside a reasonable sphere of action. Herein lies the delicate distinction between the bold general and the reckless adventurer. The choice of objective is substantially influenced by the appreciation of all the means and forces at his disposal, also by the estimate of expected resistance, and only from a consideration of these factors can the final decision be taken as to the attainability of the object. Shaped by such reflections—and moods, for who would deny that moods play their part—the decision

begins to emerge with increasing clarity. Doubts arise, for so much is still in the dark. Responsibility rears her giant form before the mind in its travail. Then the spirit speaks, the fist strikes the table, the die is cast, and the commander appears in the circle of those who wait to accomplish his will.

Not every act is favoured with such happy conception or such easy birth. Meetings, discussion, committees, councils of war, etc., are the enemies of vigorous and prompt decision and their danger increases with their size. They are mostly burdened with doubts and petty responsibilities, and the man who pleads for action ill endures the endless hours of discussion. I remember in my experience of conferences a certain member who used to speak on every subject and always made the same speech. The power of listening or remaining silent or agreeing is a rare gift, far rarer than the gift of oratory, which is most pernicious when it loses the capacity to stop, like the man who learnt to ride the bicycle.

The man who is called to action will have subordinates to bring him the material on which to base his decision. In matters of detail he will listen to the advice of experts, and one confidant perhaps will accompany him to the very threshold of decision. The true leader is marked by his ability to hear and use and follow advice without losing the freedom of responsible action.

It is now time to give the *order* so that the decision can take a form. At this stage the commander's

will finds its strongest expression. Hitherto, as long as the resistance to be overcome was personal only, the decision has been a personal matter, a part of the man's self, but as soon as it takes a form it meets external resistance and inertia in its further communication in and through other human channels. The will arising out of the decision must therefore express itself all the more sharply and clearly in form. It is not without good reason that in military life we insist on a special phraseology for orders. It must express the commander's will so clearly that no doubt can trouble weaker spirits, while the refractory are forced to comply. The commander must expect to find both these temperaments among the instruments of his will and they may, indeed they always will, create obstacles which he must try to avoid or diminish by the force and clarity of his language. If he allows others to issue orders in his name he must be certain that they speak his words, for no matter how labour and communication may be lightened by the use of certain customary forms, the order should nevertheless not be lacking in those features of phrase which are essentially characteristic of the commander himself. The higher his rank, the greater the distance between him and the final executive and the greater the danger that the decision will lose in energy and that his will will fail to agitate the remoter fibres of the military body. It is therefore the commander's great task to force his will so vigorously into the chosen channels that its pulsation will be perceptible in their uttermost

ramifications. The will of Frederick and Napoleon was a living force in the humblest grenadier.

The commander's subordinates are the indispensable channels for the transmission and execution of his decision. Their selection is difficult and subject to chance, and their worth or worthlessness is often recognized too late. Disappointment in his colleagues is a commander's daily portion, and it is one of his prime tasks to recognize promptly their strength and their weaknesses and to apportion the correct measure of confidence accordingly. Those who stand nearest to the commander, the officers of his staff, must be so penetrated by his will, if not by his spirit, that they *execute* it, be it from conviction, obedience or fear. The same demand must be made of the subordinate leaders whose duty it is to take executive action in their own limited sphere. The commander will tell them what he considers necessary for the execution of his will, but no more, and he will leave them that freedom in the manner thereof which alone ensures ready co-operation in the spirit of the whole. There will always be details in which a commander must just hope for the best.

No man of action, no commander, has finished when he has taken his decision and embodied it in an order. He remains to the last moment responsible for its execution in the way he intended and for the manifestation of his will in every stage of its accomplishment. The supervision of these matters involves technicalities of control and command too detailed to

be described here. One evening before a battle I was taking steps to discover whether our order had reached all the quarters concerned, and I received the brief answer in an honest Berlin accent, "*Ick jreife an.*"* He had understood, and that was the essential thing.

* *Ich greife an*, I attack.

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